

LOVE
SWEETENS
TRUTH

OR HOW
CALEB CONQUERED



CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

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CALEB TRIES WHAT KINDNESS WILL DO.

LOVE SWEETENS TRUTH;

OR,

HOW CALEB CONQUERED.



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LOVE SWEETENS TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

TROUBLE AT THE FARM.



THE south-west gale was driving its thick rain across a barren and almost treeless country-side, along one of whose roads a boy walked, bending against the force of the gale, but always hurrying on. Banks of earth and stone on either side served instead of hedges, and but few crops were to be seen in the fields: the climate did not encourage them. The district was for the most part laid out in wide pasture-lands, where sheep and sturdy black cattle were reared, and now and then a small troop of horses high up on the hill-side.

The boy, with the collar of his jacket pulled up about his ears, and trying with his body to shelter the contents of a basket that he carried, trampled along the muddy ruts towards a small whitewashed house that stood near with scattered farm-buildings about it. On reaching it he peeped cautiously in at the window, and then laid a bolder hand on the latch.

"Mother, is Sally gone to fetch the cows?"

"Yes, Caleb; you have no need to go;" and a tall, pale woman met him in the passage. "My boy, you are wet to the skin."

"No, no, mother, 'tis more mist than rain," said Caleb, cheerfully, "and wet don't hurt me. How are you this evening?"

"As God wills," replied the pale woman. "This weather never suits me. What did the doctor say, Caleb?"

"Oh, not much. He said as I was to feed you well and keep you up, mother; so, as you won't eat in common, I have brought something out of the common for your tea: look there!"

It was only a couple of tea-cakes that Caleb produced so proudly from his basket, followed by a medicine-bottle and a few parcels of groceries ordered by his mother; but he regarded them with great satisfaction.

"Where's father?" he asked, suddenly.

"Down in the lower croft, mending the bank where the cattle broke through."

"He won't be in yet, think you?"

"Well, scarcely."

"Then, mother, you shall have your tea straight away." And Caleb busied himself about its preparation, while his mother leaned back on the settle, and followed him with a look half sad, half pleased.

"That is my good, careful boy," she said, presently, after looking over the parcels; "you have thought of all, and more than all I told you."

Caleb turned from toasting the tea-cake, and their eyes met lovingly. He was a plain boy, broad and rugged-featured, but none the less was he the joy of his mother's heart; and as for her, she was the very light of his life.

Tea was progressing cheerfully, when a heavy step on the stone flag announced the farmer's return. He came in, a strong, lean man, not past middle age; and as his eye fell on the little luxuries of the table, the toasted cake, the fresh milk in the little jug, his brow darkened. Caleb's brow darkened also.

"Come to the fire, Evan," said his wife, nervously; "you must be chill with staying so long out in the damp."

"Long!" growled the farmer. "I had need to be up early and out long, if my hard-earned money is

to be squandered in this way by an idle fellow who has hardly done a hand's turn all to-day."

"I worked in the field all the morning, father," broke in Caleb; "and if things cost their weight in gold they would be worth getting to do good to mother; she cannot eat like——"

A touch on his arm from Mrs. Price stopped him, but his father took it up.

"No more could I eat if I sat poking over the fire all day. You should muster about the house a bit, Mary; that would do you more good than all this doctor's stuff. And if things go on as they have been going, with cold springs and low markets, you may be thankful soon if you have dry bread to make use of, let alone cake and butter. You don't feel worse?" he added, as his wife made no reply.

"No, no, Evan; only this damp weather makes me so as I can scarcely breathe. Get your father's supper, Caleb."

"No," said the farmer, rising. "I am going to see if I can do any good to Martha Morgan's cow that she sent up about. There is a good manager for you, —no waste goes on in her house. Don't you wait up for me, may be I'll get a bit of supper there."

"Finish your tea, mother," said Caleb, as soon as the door had closed behind his father. "There now!" as she shook her head; "I do wish father——"

"My son, it is your answering again that hurts me most. You and father do not see things the same way; but hard answers will not persuade him to look at them your way, let alone the sin of it."

"I know, mother, but he does rile one——"

"There is the mischief; you should watch, and not let it rile you."

"Can't help it, mother."

"Grace could enable you to help it, my boy. Carry your trouble to God, and He will help you to overcome it. Do so to-night, Caleb, and God's grace be on you. Good night."

Caleb stood for a few minutes gloomily by the fire, and then, not caring to meet his father again, he went up to bed.

The small breach between father and son was apparently closed the next morning, like many before it; but the ground between them was torn and seamed with former disagreement, so that a word might suffice to open the gulf again. Caleb felt this, and avoided his father as much as possible for a time; but soon a growing anxiety swallowed up all other thoughts. The weather improved, but his mother's health did not, and a fear crept over him that he would not confess even to himself. Caleb went in to see the kindly but overworked doctor again; he had been the means of communication

ever since his mother had failed, even with the help of a market cart, to accomplish the six miles of hilly road that lay between them and the market town. The doctor gave fresh medicine, and promised to call soon; and Caleb tried to persuade himself and his mother that this visit from the doctor himself would set everything right. Nevertheless when Sunday came, and his father was called away to attend a club funeral, Caleb felt unwilling to lose any of the time in which he might be with his mother, and proposed to stay away from church.

But she replied, "Nay, my son, I would not have you miss; remember, it is my wish that you should never miss any opportunity for good,—service, Sunday school, prayer meeting, be it what it may. It is afternoon service this Sunday; I will rest a bit while you are gone, and then we will have a good long talk, and you will bring me back something, a text, or a hymn, or a bit of the sermon to think over."

"When will father be home?"

"Not till late."

"Then I will run all the way home from church, and be back afore you could think it, mother."

Caleb was as good as his word. He dived into the cowhouse, where Sally had begun her afternoon milking, and dipped up a foaming cup of milk, which he might carry to his mother without fear of encounter-

ing his father ; for Farmer Price was of opinion that milk, from which cheese and butter could be made, was far too precious to drink.

A something in his mother's look and manner frightened away the smile with which he offered her the cup.

"What is it, mother?"

She drew him down on to the stool at her feet, and put her arm round him before she answered, "The doctor has been here, Caleb."

"Well, mother?"

"He was sent for to Mrs. Williams' child, so he called in. And, Caleb, he says I must prepare for going very soon."

Caleb understood, but he shut his heart against the meaning, and answered, "Going, mother! does he say you must go away to get well?"

"Ay, and a long way, Caleb, even to the better country. My only trouble is for those I leave behind; promise me that you will meet me there, my son; I shall look for you——"

"Oh, mother! oh no, mother! I can't do without you; you must not go,—not yet, mother."

It was long before Caleb's sobs and passionate outcries could be quieted. At last his mother touched the right chord. "Do not make it harder for me, Caleb; I cannot bear much more. Do not make me

sorry I told you, that we two might talk together as those who have eternity in sight."

For her sake Caleb controlled himself, and listened quietly while she told him many things. "I have nothing to leave you," she said, after a time, "except a mother's blessing on a right good son. You have been a great comfort to me, Caleb; try to be the same to father after I am gone. I have often thought that I stood somehow in the way of your having a right understanding together. Anyway, father will soon have no one but you to look to for love; try to be indulgent where you and he do not agree: you cannot alter him."

She paused, and Caleb made a sound of assent. "Do not grieve about me overmuch," she went on. "I know you will miss me, my darling; but you know it is ungrateful to God to fret too much at His dealings, seeing He does all in love. When I am in trouble, Caleb, I just go to Jesus with it all, and He does comfort me wonderfully. And I shall not be right happy even there unless I know that my boy is walking with God here below, trying to be a brave, cheerful, contented man. Will you do this for me, Caleb?"

"I'll try, mother."

"I am not afraid but you will be truthful and upright," she said; "but I am fearing lest you should

be inclined to be a bit strict in judging others. Remember you cannot tell what their natures and temptations may be. And remember that Christ died for them also, and loves them; and if He is patient with them I think we may be so too. I should like my son to be strong and gentle, honest and kind-hearted, loving and serving both God and man."

"I'll try, mother."

"God helping you," added Mrs. Price. "His blessing be upon you, my son. Now will you read to me a bit? I should like you to begin at the fourteenth of John."

So Caleb read, and the holy words soothed and comforted him as well as his mother. After that they had tea together, and Caleb told her all he had heard at church, and the evening passed peacefully if not cheerfully. When they parted Mrs. Price gave Caleb her Bible, and with a trembling hand wrote his name in it below her own, and the date when it had been given by her Sunday-school teacher.

Before the next Sunday dawned Mrs. Price was gone. She went in the night, so quietly that no one knew the hour of her going, so calmly that she must have passed without waking from sleep to death.

The farmer, who had not to the last believed in her danger, burst into violent fits of grief. He avoided

the room where that silent figure lay, and sat below, receiving all the neighbours who called. Caleb was surprised and touched at the violence of his father's grief; but he could not bear to sit with him and receive the unmeaning consolations of people who had not known what his mother was, nor how he missed her. What right had they to tell him that "he would get over it after a bit," that "it was in the course of nature that he should lose her sooner or later," that "it was best as it was, for she would never have been strong again, and must have been a burden to herself and others all her life?" It was well meant, this irritating consolation, but Caleb would not even admit that much, and made his escape to shut himself up again in that room avoided by his father, the only one in which he did not feel utterly desolate. There he would kneel and sob until exhaustion brought on a dull, unfeeling state that was in itself a relief; but in the presence of others he was cold and constrained, and apparently unmoved.

It was so on the funeral day, when the sad bustle that seemed to be a relief to his father gave him a sense of tightness and oppression that had become almost unbearable when they reached the churchyard gate. But there the words spoken by the clergyman who met them fell on him like dew upon a drooping plant; this was comfort indeed, and such as his

mother would herself have pointed to. Caleb's thoughts were lifted to the world beyond, and this life seemed to him but a short and inconsiderable matter, soon to be overpast, and then would come the happy meeting above.

The next day they went to work again as usual, as people say ; but Caleb felt how different it was from what had been usual, when he returned home and met no mother's eye turned to the door to greet him, and he knew that the ear which had always been so ready to hear him was closed for ever to earthly sounds. The feelings which had upheld him during the funeral soon failed him in the wear and tear of common life, for Caleb had yet to learn that none but the hopes which are built upon the living Rock can stand against the blast. Still, although staggering, he held onwards.

Caleb tried to fulfil his mother's wish and make friends with his father ; but it is hard to break through the habit of years, and his father did not help him. Sorrow, instead of softening, seemed to sour him ; and if Caleb offered him any little unwonted service, he took it as his due in his bereaved state, and seemed to think himself the only sufferer, the only person to be considered and sympathized with. His tone was that of one who was injured and almost aggrieved by his wife's death just at this

busy time of year, when times were so hard, and there was no one to look after the dairy and household affairs within doors. The dairy ! Caleb felt that dairy and farm and everything might go, if at the price of that he could get to clasp her hand, to look into her eyes once more. When his father talked in that strain, Caleb would go away as soon as he dared, and at night, as if to make up to his mother for the slight cast on her, he would utter aloud through his sobs all the loving names that he had ever called her, and cry himself to sleep in his loneliness. If he was pale and heavy-eyed the next morning, there was no one to notice it now.

It was during this time that Caleb got into disgrace about something that took place at a fair. He accompanied his father to help drive in some young stock for sale, and with them was a cow that had slipped her calf, and was in other respects weakly and un-serviceable for dairy use ; but she was a pretty creature, and the farmer determined to get as high a price as he could for her. She attracted the notice of a gentleman, who heard all that the farmer had to say in her praise, and had all but concluded the bargain, when he was called off by a friend to inspect some purchase. The farmer being called off in his turn, only Caleb was left when the gentleman came back and examined the cow again, but not, Caleb thought,

with the air of one who knew what he was about. Then he asked again whether they were sure that she was a strong healthy animal, and would give plenty of milk; and instead of vague answers such as his father had given, Caleb returned a sturdy "No." His father had promised him the luck-penny if he carried the matter through successfully; but this made Caleb suspect more than ever that it was not a fair bargain, and he would at least be just and honest in his dealings, for had not his mother trusted him to be so? Of course the bargain fell through, and when Farmer Price learned what had happened he was very angry. He did not say much until they were on their way home again, the poor cow shambling along in front of them, but then reproaches fell fast upon Caleb, who held his tongue and walked doggedly on. He was in the right, and that sustained him, but his father's last speech did startle him with a vague alarm. He had learnt, the farmer said, that it was no good to look for help to his son; help he must have, and he would have, though hired help he could not afford; and if Caleb did not like it, he might just remember that he himself had driven him to it.

What was his father going to do? and how could he have help without paying for it? Caleb would not ask his father what he meant, and, however much he turned

the words over, he could find no meaning to them. The meaning came before long, when Caleb, returning to the house for a tool that he wanted, found a carpenter busy papering and doing up his mother's bedroom.

"What's up now?" he exclaimed, looking on in amazement.

"Why, we are making ready for the new Mrs. Price," said the carpenter.

"For what?" Caleb turned dizzy for a moment, and clutched at the door-handle.

"For Mrs. Morgan, of Littleback, sure, that your father is going to marry in the last of the month. Bless the lad, did he never tell you aught about it? Why, 'tis the talk of the country-side."

"It is a — very good arrangement," said Caleb, recovering himself, "and my father did tell me something of it awhile ago." But to himself he said, "It is a great shame, and I cannot stand it, and I won't have it! Martha Morgan in mother's place! And father ought to have told me, and not leave me to find it out in this way."

It had been fear of how his son would take it that had kept the farmer from telling him; but now he knew that it could no longer be hidden, and he began that evening to dwell on the advantages of the step; how the farms would be joined, and house and dairy well looked after, and outdoor help

would be brought too, for Martha Morgan had a son a little older than Caleb, "A nice companion for you," said the farmer.

Caleb had sat silent, but at this he burst out, "There's nothing nice about it. You can do as you like, of course, but I hate it all!"

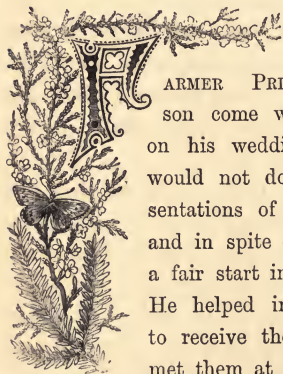
Farmer Price was prepared for opposition at first, and he went on trying to talk Caleb over, assuring him that they should be more comfortably off than ever they had been before, until the boy felt as though if he remained to listen any longer he must do or say something wild, for which he should be sorry afterwards; and he rushed away to rock himself on his bed and sob until he fell asleep for very weariness.

It did occur to Caleb that he might go away and take service under some neighbouring farmer, and so escape that which he dreaded; but no, that would not be what his mother would approve. He would stay by his father, and oh, if he could but behave better towards him! Perhaps it was partly his own grumpy manner that had made him wish to get somebody else in the house. Often after he had spoken he thought of a much better answer that he might have made; but again and again, when the opportunity came, grumpiness prevailed, and coldness responded to coldness, as before.



CHAPTER II.

CALEB AND HIS BIBLE SET OFF TOGETHER.



FAIRMER PRICE tried to make his son come with him to the church on his wedding day, but this Caleb would not do, in spite of all representations of what people might say, and in spite of his own wish to make a fair start in the new state of things. He helped in the preparations made to receive them on their return, and met them at the door; but the words of greeting died on his lips as he looked at the woman who was to take his mother's place, and he stood aside in silence to let them pass in. They all seemed to be in high spirits, and the new mistress declared herself well pleased with all the arrangements,

and spoke to Caleb in a friendly way, which, however, gave him no pleasure, for he felt sure from something in the tone that it was for show rather than for wear. Her son Sam, who was not much bigger than he, patronized him, which was worse; but Caleb had found himself a text that morning that stayed in his mind all day, and kept him, as he said to himself, out of harm. It was, "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."

Martha Morgan well deserved her character of good manager. Under her rule the house was clean, the dairy cleaner, every scrap of everything turned to the greatest possible account. Sally scarcely dared speak above her breath; even the farmer had to rub his shoes and to be far more particular about his pipe than he had ever been before. Her treatment of Caleb had nothing in it that could be laid hold of; she was not unkind in word, but she made him nobody in the house. He who had been trusted, consulted, told of everything by his mother, now knew nothing of what was going on, and was treated as one whose opinion was of no consequence, and who could not even go to market alone. Sam seemed to step into his place, and he was like a labourer employed in the farm work, and generally, or so he fancied, given jobs to do that kept him apart from his father.

There was a fair again, but it was Sam who accompanied the farmer this time. The two returned highly pleased with their day's work, the farmer full of praises of the capital way in which Sam had managed the purchase of some sheep.

"I never knew such a boy for business," he said; "not like some, who will spoil your bargain for you the moment your back is turned."

"Have not I always said you would find Sam a real help?" replied his wife. "He knows what he is about better than some of his age."

Certainly Sam in his best jacket and necktie was a much sprucer and more knowing-looking fellow than rough-haired Caleb in his work-stained clothes and crumpled shirt-collar. Caleb glanced from himself to Sam; he knew what his father and step-mother were alluding to, and such a flood of bitter feelings arose in his heart that the boy was dismayed at the discovery of so much wickedness within him, and by way of subduing it he forced himself to go down with the others to the field into which they turned their new purchase, and praised the plumpness of the sheep and the good appearance of the little flock. He felt better after this, and able to say his prayers that night with a feeling of being at peace with himself and God.

But Sam was perplexed. He judged Caleb by him-

self, and had expected black looks and depreciatory remarks, and this mild behaviour put him out.

"There's something up, mother," he said, the next day when they two were together; "he's none so soft as he pretends, and I expect we shall have to pay for it."

"Never you mind," returned his mother. "You let things be, and leave me to manage. Why, you are first favourite with him already; he would a deal sooner settle the farm on you than on Caleb, who cannot so much as——whisht, he's coming."

"Sam," said the farmer, coming in, "where's that hook you had of me a day or two back? I want it now at once, and I cannot find it in its place."

Sam turned hot and uncomfortable, for he knew that the farmer was very particular about things being put back in their place, and he knew too that he had left that hook under the hedge on which he had been using it. But he said, "I put it back, I'm sure. Caleb must have had it out for something while we were at the fair. I'll run and see."

In a few minutes he returned breathless. "It was just as I thought," he panted, "but there 'tis."

"There 'tis," repeated the farmer, "and as rusty as an old cask hoop. Where had he got it?"

But Sam, seized with a fit of unusual industry, had already gone back to his work.

The next morning, all the new sheep had disappeared. The gate was swinging loose on its hinges, and the field empty. Caleb was the first thought of the three others; he had done it out of spite. Caleb was, as usual, away doing the odds and ends of the farmwork, but his father shouted to him to come.

"Now I think of it," said Martha Price, "he was a longer time than usual turning out the cows after milking yesterday; you may depend it was then he did it."

"Caleb," said his father, sternly, as he came in, "what were you doing when you went to turn out the cows yesterday evening?"

The boy hesitated; those two unsympathizing grown-up people would laugh at him if he told what he had been about. The next moment his habitual truth and openness prevailed, and he replied, "I was getting blackberries, father. There are some uncommonly fine ones down the lane."

"Blackberries indeed!" began Martha Price; but the farmer, confirmed in his suspicions by that momentary hesitation, thundered out, "I will tell you what you were about, sir, since you won't tell me. You were setting open the gate of the hill field, that the sheep we brought from fair might all get out and be lost,—and all for envy of Sam, because he is a sharper fellow than you."

"The sheep lost! the hill field gate open!" repeated Caleb. "Why, Sam, I saw you running up from there yesterday with all your might, with something under your arm."

The conviction flashed upon Sam as he spoke; it was all that unlucky hook. The field into which they turned the sheep was the very one in which he had left it; and in his hurry to bring it back to the farmer he must have left the gate unfastened. How should he get out of this mess? His mother relieved him from present perplexity by exclaiming,—

"Yes, that's it, put it all upon Sam; say he did it. Likely he should want to lose the sheep he took so much trouble to get."

"Any way, it's done; the sheep are lost, and the first thing is to find them again;" and Caleb took up his hat and went out, followed by the others.

The sheep were found and brought back at night-fall, after a tedious search. After another attempt to make Caleb confess to it, the farmer gave up all hopes of clearing up the mystery of their escape. He did this partly at Sam's request, made with an air of generosity, that he would pursue the matter no further, and consider it past and done with it; it was not likely to happen again, Sam thought. So Sam stood high in favour, and began almost to

persuade himself that he had behaved very well throughout the whole affair, while Caleb was more shut out and looked down upon than ever. Martha Price, especially, took no pains now to hide her dislike to him; and Caleb kept out of her way, always hoping that something might happen to change this uncomfortable state of things. Something did happen before long, when a former servant of the house sent to ask for a little milk for her sick child. Caleb felt that her request had little chance of being granted, especially if made by him, but there was no one else to do it, and he went to look for his step-mother, swallowing his unwillingness to ask a favour of her.

She received the petition with even more scorn than he had expected. Milk! she did not know what the woman was thinking of, that she had the face to ask such a thing.

"She has had it before, when—before you came here," said Caleb.

"Your mother might do as she liked," returned Martha Price; "I know what good farming is, and I want every drop of my skim for the calves and the pigs. They get little enough as it is. I can't spare it from the pigs," she added, impatiently, seeing that Caleb did not go.

"Children are more than pigs," he said. "Her

baby is so ill, it can keep nothing else on its stomach. She would be willing to pay for a drop if you would please to spare it her."

"Sell my milk! not I, so it's no use bothering. Why, there is not one of the farmers round would do such a thing."

"More's the pity," said Caleb. "Give her a drop then, for once, for the sake of the poor baby."

"Nonsense! they make a deal of fuss over their children, which they might just as well let alone. I believe it's just a pretence, and you may go and tell her so, and tell her she need not come seeking milk from me."

"I won't tell her anything of the sort!" returned Caleb, firing up. "If your messages are like that, you may carry them yourself. And it is a shame that you won't give a poor woman——"

"Hold your tongue, sir, and go as I tell you."

"That I won't!" cried Caleb; and Martha Price rose up from her milk pans, apparently intending to lay violent hands on him, when suddenly the farmer appeared. Without waiting to hear the cause of the quarrel, he laid the blame at once on Caleb. He never had a moment's peace in the house, he said, and never should have, as long as Caleb was in it—an ill-tempered, ill-conditioned boy, always trying to set everybody by the ears—with more of the same

sort, drowning all Caleb's attempts to answer or protest.

"The sooner the house is rid of you, the better for every one in it," the farmer concluded; "I have borne with you long enough; now begone with you, and the sooner the better."

"I am going, father," said Caleb, slowly, and went upstairs without another word. He sat down on his bed and looked round, and wondered why he had come up to his room at this unusual time of day, and why his heart was beating with great thuds against his side. What was it that had happened?

Meantime the farmer, as soon as his storm of words was over, began to think he had gone a little too far, and would have followed Caleb, but his wife stopped him.

"Let be," she said; "you were quite right. You have done the best thing for him, as well as for every one else; it's a lesson he won't forget for the rest of his life. And you can always keep your eye on him, and know how he is going on. Let be now."

So the farmer did let be; and Caleb sat alone upstairs, and slowly bethought himself of what he was about to do. He did not pray, he felt still in too great a turmoil and too indignant for that;

earthly things rose up between and shut out the spiritual. He began to consider what he should take. He would not have that woman say that he had gone off with anything that was not his, and what had he that could fairly be called his own? His better suit of clothes was bought with his father's money, and had her darns and patches upon them. No, he would not have them. But there was his Bible, the Bible his mother had given him, that indeed was his very own; and Caleb took it up, and hugged it tightly under his arm. Something rose up in his throat, and made him feel that if he stayed any longer he should cry, and that he was determined he would not do, so he hurried down, with the Bible under his arm, his footsteps sounding hollow on the stairs. Nobody in the house, nobody in the garden and haggart; but there, down towards the field, went his father, with a halter over his arm.

"Good-bye, father!" shouted Caleb; and he knew by a slight change in his attitude that his father had heard him, although he made no answer. This little effort to part friends raised Caleb's spirits, and he walked more cheerfully down the lane and turned into the high road.

Now came the question which way to go. Not towards the town, where everybody knew him, nor to the mountain district, where dwellings were

few and scattered. He would go to the lower land, which was more thickly peopled, and hire himself to some farmer there. Farmer Price made sure that he would go to one of the neighbours whom he knew well, and get him to take him in for a bit; and then, if the neighbour interceded, and Caleb came and begged pardon, why, he would take him back again, the farmer thought. The boy had his good points; you could trust him as well behind your back as before your face, and in truth he could ill be spared. But such was not Caleb's intention. He could not bear to go where his story would be known and talked over, and the particulars inquired into over and over again; he would go a long way off, to some part where nobody knew him nor cared where he came from. He had no thought of going back; his father had turned him out, and henceforth he must earn his living for himself as best he could.

So for several hours Caleb walked steadily along the road, keeping the hills behind him, until he was far beyond any place that he had been to before. It was getting late in the afternoon, and he had had no dinner, but excitement prevented his feeling any hunger. It was much easier to go walking on than to inquire at the farmhouses, and to meet the surprise and the questions which were sure to follow; but at last he summoned courage to stop at

a farmhouse door and make his request. A boy? said the farmer's wife. No, it was not the time for changing boys; they might want one at Michaelmas, if he liked to come again. Had he been turned off, then, that he was seeking a place this time of year? It was the same at the next, and the next house that Caleb tried. They did not want a boy; but they wanted to know why Caleb was looking for a place, and where he had last been, and many other questions which he had no mind to answer.

Night was falling fast when he came up to the door of the fourth house. A young farmer answered his knock, pipe in hand. "Nay, we keep no boy," said he, in answer to Caleb's inquiry. "I do all my work, and will do, please God I keep my health, until the young un grows up to help me. But it is late, and there's no place to lodge in near by. I would ask you in, only my missis has just had a baby, and we must keep the house as quiet as we can. You might sleep on the new-thrashed barley-straw in the barn if you like. And stay," as Caleb was thanking him, "you have had no supper belike? Wait you a bit."

He soon returned with a good piece of bread and cheese. "There," he said, "and here's a corner of the barn, it's fresh and clean anyhow, and good night to you, my lad."

Caleb thanked the friendly farmer heartily, and then began upon his bread and cheese. He found that he was very hungry, and felt much the better for his supper, and very ready to go to bed. He pulled off his boots, and lay down, but started up again. What, were his prayers such a mere matter of custom, that the mere fact that things were not as usual round him could make him forget them? and now too, when he needed help so much, and when his heavenly Father had just provided him with food and lodging? Caleb clasped his hands, and prayed more earnestly than usual, asking forgiveness if he had done wrong in coming away, and that God would bless his father and all at home.





CHAPTER III.

CALEB FINDS A PLACE.



CALEB was awake with the first glimmer of daylight, and his preparations for starting afresh did not take long. The spring outside served him for basin, and a prayer offered up under the hedge in the pale dewy morning had a wonderful freshness and pleasure about it. No one was stirring yet in the house, and Caleb passed as noiselessly as he could, and set out, full of hopes that to-day he should find a place. He thought of Jacob on his journey to Haran, and how the Lord had prospered the time of his service there. "Perhaps the Lord will prosper me," he thought; "and I shall return to my father with flocks and herds. This is a much richer country to look at than where we live." It was indeed a

better wooded and better cultivated part that he had come into ; the fields were full of corn and mangolds and other crops ; and though there was still a good deal of pasture-land, it was much greener and more luxuriant than that which the shallow stony soil could produce with which Caleb was best acquainted. Farms and villages were frequent, but farm-boys too seemed to be terribly plentiful ; and Caleb lost count at last of the number of times he had been refused, and always without so much as an offer of breakfast.

In the course of the morning Caleb passed through a town, and had some thoughts of offering himself as errand-boy at the shops ; but he wisely reflected that he was far better suited for farm work, and determined to try his luck still a little longer before he fell back upon the town. His knees were growing shaky, and his heart beginning to fail him with so many refusals. He went out of the way to call at a farmhouse, where he met with the same reply, and lost the high road, and got into a lane that led him across a stream at the bottom of the valley, and up a long hill-side towards a village on the top. Caleb dragged wearily along. The cheerful thoughts of the morning about the blessing of Jacob gave way to self-reproach, as many an occasion presented itself before him when he had widened the breach

between himself and his father by some hard or indifferent answer, when a little love, a little indulgence, such as his mother had bidden him show, what might it not have done? How could he expect the blessing of God upon such a son as he had proved himself? There was much truth in Caleb's self-reproaches; he had not acted with that love and gentleness which he might have used; but the present low condition of his body acted upon his mind, and made everything look black to him. He reached the outskirts of the village at last, and leant up against a gate-post, too utterly weary and down-hearted to go on.

No farmhouses were in sight, only cottages, and from the nearest of these a little girl came out, dragging by the hand a toddling blue-eyed brother.

"You don't seem very well," she said to Caleb, after the two had gazed at him in silence for a few minutes.

"No, I'm not ill, only very tired and hungry," replied Caleb. "I have had nothing to eat yet all day. You could not get me a bit of bread, could you?"

The little girl shook her head. "Mother's out in the potato-field, and I wasn't to touch nothing till she came home," she said. "But Patience will help you, I know."

Patience! that was poor comfort, Caleb thought, when one was sinking with hunger. The little girl had turned away, and was going with all the speed of her small brother's feet to another cottage door.

"Patience! Patience!" she cried, knocking with her fist; and an old woman with a kindly, weather-beaten face answered the summons.

"What, a poor boy with nothing to eat all day!" she said, as the little girl eagerly explained her errand. "Bring him here, my dear, bring him here; he can have a sup of broth and a bit of bread, let him be who he will, and welcome too."

Caleb gladly followed the little messenger, and was served by the old woman with such a basin of *cowl* as he thought he had never tasted before. Her kindly old eyes peered out at him from the other side of the fireplace, watching until he should be sufficiently restored to answer the questions that she was ready to ask. The little girl sat down on a stool and drew her brother on to her lap, and their two pairs of round eyes followed every movement of Caleb's hand and spoon.

"Now, youngster," said old Patience, when he pushed the basin from him, and became for the first time conscious of being watched, "who are you? and how came you to be roaming the country in this way, when every hand is wanted for the



CALEB FINDS A FRIEND.

work? A common tramp you are not, and you don't look like a bad one neither: tell me how it is."

Something frank and pleasant in the old woman's manner moved Caleb to give her his confidence, and he told all to her, concluding with, "It is a deal of it my fault, I know, and I am very sorry, but I cannot go back now if I might, to live with her and her son, and I want now to get my own living, and not be dependent on any one."

"Ah, lad," said Patience, "I'm not saying but you might have done better if you had got hold of it by the right end, as it were; but that's all past and gone, and the thing is now to see what we can do for the best. Run, Patty, and see is John Williams thatching his rick still, and tell him to come down and speak to me a bit. The lad he had went home sick," she added, as Patty ran off, leaving her small brother to follow very contentedly at the corner of the old woman's apron, "and he was looking out for some one to take his place last week, I know."

John Williams, a spare, anxious-looking man, came to meet them, brushing the ends of straw off his jacket. He heard what Patience had to say, and looked hard at Caleb, but replied No, he did not want a boy at present. "I spoke to Jem about coming," he said, "and he has to go back and fore now and

again to his sick wife, so that every place would not suit him, and he is willing to come for what I can give. But there's Mr. Roberts was speaking to me about a boy—he's turned off Tim, you know—and if you would like to try him," he went on, turning to Caleb, "I don't mind if I go down there with you and see would you be likely to suit."

Full of renewed hope, Caleb followed Farmer Williams through part of the village and down the hill towards a house of a somewhat better appearance than those in the village street, with a small flower-garden in front, and a yard with outbuildings behind. As they went, Williams told him that Mr. Roberts was a quiet man enough, and a good master, for all he knew, but queer in his ways, from having lived nearly all his life in foreign parts. Some said that he had been in the Spanish army, others that he had been clerk in some house of business in South America; but nobody knew anything for certain about him, except that he had suddenly come among them at the time when a portion of the Tresaith estate had been put up for sale, had bought a little land, and had settled down here with his foreign-looking wife, who could scarcely speak English then, and did not speak it over well even now.

By this time they had reached the door, and

were admitted into the passage, where they waited till Mr. Roberts came. He was a tall, handsome man, with large gray eyes and a military-looking moustache; and Caleb took a fancy to him at once, and clutched his cap tightly in the earnestness of his hope that he would engage him. He walked a little lame, Caleb saw, as he led the way to a small sitting-room, and there heard what Williams had to tell him.

"Can you do what you are told?" said Mr. Roberts, turning to Caleb.

"Yes, sir, I believe so."

"And can you remember the orders given you?"

"I used to do so, sir," answered Caleb, thinking of the time when he was accustomed to be his mother's messenger.

"And you have been accustomed to farm work all your life.—I will give him a trial, Williams, and thank you for the trouble you have taken about it."

Then Williams went away, and Mr. Roberts told Caleb what his work would be, and how much wages he gave. Looking up at him as he still stood there with his Bible under his arm, he asked, "Is that all your luggage?"

"Yes, sir; I was thinking if you would please to advance me a shilling or two on my first quarter's

wages to buy a shirt and a pair or two of socks, I shall do very well for the rest."

Mr. Roberts put five shillings into his hand with an odd half-smile, and then bade him go out and join the man who had come to fill the gap until a boy could be found, and he would tell the woman to prepare supper and bed for him.

The household consisted only of the master and mistress and one maid, besides the man who had been hired to do the necessary outdoor work.

That the village was named Tresaith, that his master kept seven cows and a horse, and that book-farming was very bothersome, and would never answer, formed the whole amount of information gained from him.

When Caleb went in to supper he found Jenny the maid in so cross a mood that she would hardly look at him; and on his asking where he was to sleep, she only pointed with her finger to a step-ladder that led to a room above the back kitchen that faced towards the yard. It was impossible that he could have offended her already, and Caleb thought he perceived the reason of her ill temper when she told him, towards the end of supper, that she should be glad if he could make himself scarce, for she had a very particular friend coming to see her, and she could not be bothered with people in her kitchen.

"If that's all, I'll be off to bed, and glad to go,"

replied Caleb, who was very tired with the doings of the last two days. "I have done, thank you, so good night."

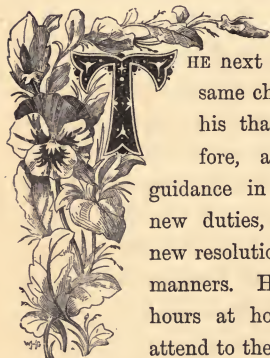
The girl grunted a not very civil good night in answer; but Caleb had long been accustomed to do without friendly salutations, and so heeded it but little. Besides, he was full of good resolutions as to his own behaviour. He was determined to behave well, now that he had a fresh start. He liked the look of his master, and of his mistress too, when he had caught sight of her across the garden paling; and Jenny's ill temper might not last—she was perhaps put out about something. And he had left that wearisome time behind him when he was always in disgrace, do what he might, and when things seemed to be going from bad to worse day by day, and he had got into a rut of ill behaviour, and did not seem able to raise himself out of it. All that was past, and a fresh field was opened for him to work in; and Caleb thanked God and took courage.





CHAPTER IV.

FRIENDSHIP WITH CUDDY MADE AND BROKEN.



HE next morning Caleb rose in the same cheerful mood. He repeated his thanksgiving of the night before, and added a prayer for guidance in the performance of his new duties, and for help to keep his new resolutions of gentleness and kindly manners. He was accustomed to early hours at home, and he had time to attend to the stable work and to sweep out the yard before he went to fetch the cows in for milking. They were being pastured just then in a field at some little distance from the house, and Caleb followed them up the lane, trying to remember the name of each, which he had dragged out of his silent

companion of yesterday. A stone flying between his nose and the hindmost cow startled him out of his thoughts. Another followed, hitting the cow on the leg, and in a moment Caleb was over the bank and collaring a small boy who crouched behind it. His first impulse was to strike him, or at least to shake him well, but with those resolutions, and the prayer for help to keep them fresh in his mind, he could not begin by beating the first human being that he came across. So he loosened his hold of the boy's jacket and cried,—

“Hollo, do you know what you're about? You ought to go and make your best bow to the cow, and ask her pardon for having hit her.”

The boy looked up, amazed at being let loose. “You are a rum un,” he said. “Ain't you going to hit me?”

“No,” said Caleb. “But why did you want to hit the cow?”

“'Cause Tim said that's what he'd do if he was me.”

“Oh. And who is Tim?” inquired Caleb.

“Why, ain't you the new boy?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Tim was the one afore you.”

“Oh, and you are his brother, I suppose? Now shall I tell you what I would do if I was you?”

“What?” said the boy, shrinking again, as though he still expected a blow.

"I would go along with the new boy, and help him to drive the cows home."

Whatever answer the boy was about to make, it was interrupted by the arrival of a new assistant, who made a violent attack upon Caleb from behind, so that he staggered forward.

"You shut up, Nan!" cried the boy, starting up. "He ain't hitting me."

Caleb turned round, and beheld a little girl gazing at him with wild light brown eyes that gleamed through a tangle of yellow locks.

"What, here is another come to fight Tim's battles," he cried, with a smile.

"No, Nanny don't care for Tim," said the boy; "she only cares for me;—don't you, Nan?"

"And Spottle," added Nanny, surveying Caleb with a doubtful air.

"I must be going after the cows," said Caleb from the top of the bank, "so come if you are coming, Tim's brother, for I don't know what else to call you."

"I'm Cuddy," said the boy, "and Tim is not my brother, he's my uncle, and mother's our granny, only we call her mother because mother's dead, and so we live with her, and call everybody the same as Jim did—that's our uncle too; but he's only fourteen, and he went to be a sailor when we came up here."

By this time they were all three at the tails of the cows, *how-howing* them on in fine style. This was the sight that met Mrs. Roberts' astonished eyes when she drew up her blind that morning,—the new boy turning the cows into the yard, and two of the old boy's family zealously helping him.

As soon as it was possible Mrs. Roberts put on her hat and went to warn Caleb against his companions. "They are the baddest people in the place," she said, in her imperfect English; "they poach, they live no man can tell how. They are not of this place, they came a few months since from Port Trawler, because their badness became so well known there they could not stay. But I knew not, and we had had a country boy, who dug up my flowers, who understood nothing, and I said, Let us not have a country boy, they are so dull, so thick; let us have this sharp, quick town boy, this Tim Tims. Ah, my sharp, quick Tim Tims was the dreadfullest boy! he beat the horse, he rode him out for his own errands, he neglected everything; and that little Cuddy, I had him here to weed, and he ate my apples, although they were so green I am sure they gave him a great pain. So now I am quite glad that you are a country boy; you will be good to the cows and to the horse, but do not be good to those bad Tims people."

"A country boy dull and thick!" thought Caleb

smiling; but his mistress so evidently meant no harm, that he could not take offence at her quaint way of expressing herself. Besides, she had reason to warn him against the Tims family; he would be on his guard. He asked some question of Jenny about the former boy, but she only answered him, "Oh, he was right enough, but master and missis were strangers, and could not make allowance for our ways. For her part she did not think to stop much longer." Jenny was more friendly than on the night before; and when Caleb told her that his master had given him leave to go into the town and get the things he needed, she surprised him by announcing that she would ask leave to go too, and show him the best shops.

Caleb's gratitude for this kindness abated considerably when he found, on reaching Llanfair, that Jenny had business of her own, and from that moment took no further heed of him, only bidding him meet her again at a druggist's to whom his master had given him an errand.

When Caleb came to the shop at the time appointed, the druggist invited him into his back parlour; and there stood Jenny and several others, each with a small glass of spirits before them. A glass was offered to Caleb, but he pushed it away, flushing with indignant surprise.

"Just to drink success to your new place, and the health of your new friends," said the druggist. "Come, it will cost you nothing."

"No, thank you; I am no dram-drinker," said Caleb, stiffly. "Come away, Jenny."

"There's silly, to make such a fuss about nothing!" cried Jenny. "You don't mean to call us drunkards, I suppose?"

"I mean that it is the way people begin when they come to be drunkards afterwards, and I will not be one!" cried Caleb, and marched out of the shop and up the street, feeling very hot and angry. His mother had warned him again and again to avoid spirits as he would avoid a deadly poison. "For indeed," she would say, "it is a double poison, both to body and soul." And his father, whatever his faults might be, was a sober man, as Caleb remembered with pride. He had never felt so disposed to be friends again with him as he did at that moment. "No," he said to himself, "mother shall never have to learn that her son took to drinking. It is a shame, a cruel shame, that there should be places such as that: traps to catch people in, looking so respectable in front, and a gin-shop behind."

Jenny's voice calling after him stopped him, and he waited till she should come up to him.

"There's a fool you have made of yourself!" she

said, "and them meaning to be so friendly. They are all laughing at you finely, I can tell you."

"Let them," said Caleb. "I should have been a fool if I had taken the spirits."

"There was Tim, and his father, and several more there," continued Jenny, "wanting to make friends with you, if you hadn't walked off in that style. Now they won't speak to you."

"Don't want them," returned Caleb; and after a muttered remark by Jenny they walked on in silence.

Jenny chose to maintain this silence all through the evening, intending that Caleb should go to bed feeling himself in disgrace; but Caleb's sturdy nature, that had made his dealings with his father difficult, here stood him in good stead. He laid out in the drawer with proud satisfaction his shirt and his two pairs of socks—the first things he had ever bought with his own money; and then taking down his mother's Bible, he read the charge to Joshua in the first chapter of the Book of Joshua. He prayed that he might "be strong, and very courageous to do according to all the law which the Lord commanded him," and lay down and slept the peaceful sleep of a good conscience.

The next day was Sunday, and Caleb put on a new shirt, and shook his clothes and rubbed up his boots—all he could do towards putting on a Sunday

appearance. He had an idea that the household would go to church in a body, as in the old happy days at home before his mother fell ill; but when he inquired of Jenny what time they went, she answered,—

“You can go when you like, or stop away if you choose. Master he stops at home, and missis too as often as not. And I shall go with some friends of my own, so don’t you be waiting for me.”

So Caleb sauntered up alone, and stood in the churchyard near some lads, who were talking among themselves and did not notice him, until the clergyman passed in, and they all followed. A benchful of boys made room for him, and Caleb found himself near a small harmonium, behind which a lady was seated. The largest pew in the church was empty, and his master and mistress were not there, but all his other friends were—old Patience, John Williams, little Patty, and even the blue-eyed brother, sitting grave and quiet on his mother’s knee. Jenny came in when they were half through the Psalms, in the smart new bonnet which had probably been the motive for her walk to Llanfair, and accompanied by two or three equally smartly dressed girls.

The singing in the church that Caleb had been accustomed to attend was led by the old churchwarden, and taken up at any pace that each singer happened to fancy; but here the well-trained voices,

kept in time by the harmonium accompaniment, pleased and impressed him. He would gladly have joined, but he did not know the hymns, and a certain shyness and stiffness about him prevented his looking over the book which the boy next him held, but was too shy to offer. Caleb did not carry away much from the sermon, probably because when he ought to have been attending, he was wondering who the lady at the harmonium was, and whether the old gentleman belonged to her whom he had just perceived near her, wrapped in great-coat and rug.

Old Patience stopped to greet him as they streamed out of the churchyard, and Caleb took the opportunity to return her the thanks of which he feared he had been somewhat sparing at their first meeting.

"All right, lad," she said, kindly; "and look you, if at any time your clothes should want a stitch, come you to me. My sight is not what it was, but I can make a darn and set a patch yet, ay, and better than many of the young ones."

"I thought to have seen you in Sunday school," said Patty, when Patience had turned away.

"Sunday school,—is there one? Who keeps it?" asked Caleb.

"Why, Miss Carter—her that plays the music in church; that was her father sitting by her. They have lived here this good while now," said Patty;

"not in the big house, that's empty, but at Hillside. She keeps the singing school too, Friday evenings."

"There's a deal bigger fellows than you in Sunday school," observed the boy who had made room for Caleb on the bench, and whom he now learned to be Patty's elder brother.

"It's no odds for that; I should like to go anyhow," said Caleb, remembering his mother's wish on the subject.

It was agreed that Caleb, if he obtained his master's leave, should meet Patty's brother John on the following Sunday morning, and be taken by him into the class.

As Caleb went home down the lane, a small ragged figure very like Cuddy dashed over the bank and scuttled away. When Mrs. Roberts soon afterwards lamented the loss of all her nuts from the lower branches of her nut tree, Caleb suspected that he knew who had taken them, and why Cuddy had kept so carefully out of the way since that first morning.

In the course of the week, however, Cuddy appeared again, with Nanny at his heels, carrying her cat.

"Tim did thrash me, and no mistake," said Cuddy, "for telling him that you wasn't half bad. He says you are only wanting to get favour with your master and missis, and you are just like everybody else, and I said, No, you wasn't, or you would ha' bet me that time. Tim would, 'cause he does."

Caleb made no answer; he was considering how to reprove Cuddy for his thievishness. Nanny came forward with her cat.

"I see you stroking your stable cat," she said, "and I thought perhaps you would like to see Spottle. Ain't she soft to hug?"

But Caleb turned upon Cuddy. "Now, Cuddy, what business have you and Nanny to be hanging about the place? Mrs. Roberts does not like it, and no wonder, when you took her apples——"

"And there's hard they was!" cried Cuddy, laughing. "I wish I'd ha' left them a bit longer. Yes, and I'd more than I could eat, so I gave Nanny some, —didn't I, Nan?"

"But don't you know it is downright wicked to steal like that?" said Caleb. "Mind, if ever I catch you at it——"

But Cuddy with a whoop and halloo scrambled over the gate and across the fields, kicking up his heels like a young colt. Nanny followed as fast as she could go, though greatly hampered by the cat.

"There now," reflected Caleb, "it is the old fault; I am always too hard. Now I have gone and undone all the good I did by being kind before, and I doubt they will never come near me again. What shall I do to make myself softer in my answers?"



CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE SINGING CLASS.



BEFORE the next Sunday came, Caleb asked his master's leave to go to Sunday school as well as to church. Certainly he might if he liked, Mr. Roberts said, provided he did first all the things that had to be done in house and stable. So Caleb rose early, finished his work in good time, and then, with his Bible under his arm, walked up into the village. John and Patty met him, and Caleb presently found himself seated among thirty boys and girls of various ages. School opened with a hymn, and Miss Carter, seeing that Caleb had no hymn-book, passed him hers, and looked over the one held by the girl nearest to her. She took no further notice of the new boy, but heard the lessons, and then gave out the chapter.

It was the eleventh of St. Matthew that they read; and Miss Carter, after reminding her class of the stern warnings in John the Baptist's preaching, which they had lately read, and the gentle, earnest counsels in the Sermon on the Mount, pointed out how different our Lord was from the prophets and preachers who had gone before Him; "a friend of publicans and sinners," not as thinking little of their sins, but as pitying and loving the sinners. She called their attention not only to the works of mercy which Jesus Himself appealed to in the beginning of the chapter as proving Him to be the Christ, but to many other passages showing His gentle and loving character, especially His praying for His murderers and dying for them. He never turned any one away with a harsh word; and here Caleb lost some of what she said while thinking how unlike he was to this. When he listened again she was saying that Jesus was still the same, always loving to all, always ready to receive and forgive them; she bade them come to Him, and abide in His love, and also to try to be like Him. Only by imitating Christ, and learning of Him, could they be loving and gentle, meek and lowly, like Him, and only by trusting in Him as their Saviour could they find rest unto their souls.

Caleb was listening now with all his ears. This was

what he had wanted—an example to go by, some one to imitate, some one to be at once his friend and his pattern. His mother had filled that place in some degree while she lived; but here was a Friend who could not fail him, who was waiting to be gracious. He would study the Gospels, and try to grow like Him, and he would go to Him in prayer. “Oh, what a good thing that I came here to-day!” he thought; “I have found now what I wanted all along.”

Miss Carter called him to her as the class separated, and said that she saw he had no hymn-book; would he like to have one and to join in the singing? then she would bring him one.

She was as good as her word, and put one into his hand as she passed to her place behind the harmonium. Up rose Caleb in the fulness of his gratitude, and made her a bow of acknowledgment. Some of the boys smiled, but Miss Carter’s quiet glance soon stopped them, and with a kindly look at Caleb she passed on. Poor boy, he had had so few presents in his life, and it was so bare of smiles, that this kindly gift went right to his heart; and then and there he made a resolution—and to his credit be it said he kept it well—that he would always go to Miss Carter’s class, and always learn a hymn to repeat to her out of the book she had given him

No matter how busy he was in the week, or how sleepy at night, when Sunday morning came there was Caleb with the Bible and hymn-book ; and Miss Carter learned, when she inquired who had text and hymn to say, to turn to Caleb as to one who never disappointed her.

There was a change in Caleb from that day forth ; those who had to do with him observed it. He did not indeed keep up to the mark which he now aimed at, and he found it often hardest in the small, petty matters of daily life to keep his high standard before him ; it did not seem worth while at the moment ; and many a sigh of regret had Caleb to heave over some unkindly answer, or opportunity let slip, because it had seemed too small a matter to heed. But his faith had begun to be a living faith ; a real love for God and for his Saviour influenced him now, as well as the love for his mother that had been the chief motive for good with him before.

Caleb had got on well with his master from the first. He liked his quiet, decided manner ; and as for his queer ways and retired habits, Caleb thought that his lameness and feeble health accounted for them in great measure ; besides, they were no business of his. Mr. Roberts' ways of farming and gardening were certainly different from what Caleb had been accustomed to, and he ventured to say so.

Mr. Roberts thereupon asked him many questions as to the ways of the farmers, and their reasons for what they did. About these Caleb could tell but little; but he asked in turn whether Mr. Roberts would be so good as to tell him his reasons for changing the old methods. His master seemed pleased at his interest in the matter, and from that time not only explained his reason when he gave an order, but he lent Caleb the books and papers on farming that he took in, well scored in the margins wherever anything had struck him as useful or noteworthy. These Caleb studied in the long evenings that had now closed in, with both pleasure and profit. The practical knowledge with which he started helped him to understand what he read; and before long Caleb became quite learned about drainage, manuring, change of crops, and many other matters.

He had had very little to do with Mrs. Roberts until one day, when she was trying to fasten up a creeper that the wind had blown loose from the wall, Caleb came to her help; and he handled the branches so gently, and avoided trampling on the borders so carefully, that he quite won her heart.

"You love gardening," she said, in her slow, quaint English.

"Mother did," said Caleb, knocking the nail too hard and doubling it up.

Then Mrs. Roberts asked him about his mother. She had not even known that she was dead, and Caleb's story interested her.

"I am sure she was a good woman," she remarked, "and you do rightly to love what she loved; and every week you shall have my gardener paper to read, as well as Mr. Roberts' farmer papers, and you shall help me grow my roses and my balsams."

"There's a mess with them nasty old papers in my kitchen," was Jenny's comment, when she saw the increasing pile at Caleb's elbow. She had a spite against those papers, because she always got into trouble if she lighted the fires with them, as she was very apt to do. But even with Jenny Caleb got on better than at first, now that he always returned her a civil answer, and took pains to keep her supplied with water and coals and vegetables, and not to bring more dirt than he could help into the kitchen.

Day after day Caleb watched in vain for an opportunity to undo the harm of his hard answer to Cuddy. He saw him, indeed, tearing over the bank or down the lane, sometimes with yellow-haired Nanny flying at his heels; but the only effect of Caleb's shout or whistle was to make him kick up his heels and prance away more wildly than before. Caleb had not much to do with the other boys and girls

about the village ; he scarcely saw them except in class, and, never having had to do with those of his own age, he felt awkward in their company. The Bible lesson every Sunday morning was a constant pleasure to him ; each passage seemed to mean so much more after it had been talked over and explained by Miss Carter ; but this pleasure he began to fear that he must give up. His clothes were getting so ragged ! and, to make matters worse, he would grow just when it was most inconvenient. If he could but put off growing till after his wages were due ! Caleb thought, as he looked with dismay at the shortening sleeves and ragged trousers.

Many times when Jenny gave him a message to the village shop, as she often did—for she never thought of sending for a thing until the moment came when she wanted it—Caleb would run in to old Patience, and get her to put a stitch in his elbow or a hasty patch on his knee. Jenny hated sewing, and never mended even her own things ; and but for the kind services of Patience, Caleb's clothes would have fallen to pieces. Mr. Roberts, seeing his toes coming out of his boots, had given him an old pair that served for Sunday wear ; yet still there was nobody half so shabby as he in school or church.

“I can't go till I have got my new boots ;” “He

is not here because his jacket was not finished;" Caleb often heard remarks like these among his companions in the class; but still every Sunday he said to himself, "I'll go to-day yet. It is no shame to be shabby when you can't help it, and it is a shame to stay away when you can help it;" and still every Sunday found him in his place.

Miss Carter did not seem to notice it, that was one comfort. It seemed to make no difference to her whether a scholar was dressed in velvet or in patches. But Miss Carter did notice it, and honoured the boy for his courage and good sense, and liked him all the better. And on the proud Sunday after his quarter's wages were paid, she rejoiced, not quite, but nearly as much as Caleb himself, when he appeared in stout corduroy trousers and fustian jacket, new and large and warm, with his hair brushed extra to suit the occasion.

Nanny stopped to gaze through her shaggy locks the first time that Caleb came across her in his tidy clothes; but Cuddy fled more hastily than ever, as though respectability and he had not much to do with one another—as indeed they had not. Cuddy had been making himself very troublesome lately by hanging about the school-house, not indeed with any desire to set foot within, but to disturb the other children by making faces in at the window or

runaway knocks at the door. If any one came out in pursuit he would be off like the wind, only to return as soon as they gave up the chase, and not in more distractingly than ever. In vain Miss Carter told her class, if the boy was so foolish as to play tricks, they should show their wisdom by not heeding them, and then he would get tired of doing it; the class were not wise enough to take her advice, and many a good lesson was almost spoilt by Cuddy's mischievous folly.

One Friday evening at the singing class, which Caleb attended as regularly as the Sunday school, a prolonged howl outside the window at the close of a hymn announced Cuddy's presence there. Most of the boys laughed; the hymn had been a beautiful and solemn one, and Miss Carter looked pained.

"Caleb, try whether you can stop this boy," she said, turning to him as he stood close behind her; "it passes a joke."

Caleb stole gently out, warned by the frequent failure of the others, and, hiding in the shadow of the porch, he caught him in the very act of scrambling up on to the window-sill. Cuddy struggled violently when he felt himself firmly grasped and pulled to the ground.

"Quietly, Cuddy," said Caleb, "it's only me. I am not going to hurt you. I mean to hold you fast

because you would run away if I did not, and I want you to hear first what I have got to say."

"I won't!" panted Cuddy. "Lev' me go, and I'll never do it again, do now!"

"Listen," said Caleb, drawing the boy out into the moonlight. "No, it is of no use struggling; I am stronger than you, and if you try to bite I shall have to hold you in a way that will not be comfortable. Cuddy, why have you been so unkind to me?"

"Me!" cried the boy, stopping short in his struggles out of sheer astonishment.

"Yes, you. You have run away when you saw me, and when I called after you, you would not answer. That was not kind."

"You don't care," said Cuddy, with another ineffectual tug.

"Yes, but I do. Was not I friendly with you the first time that we met? and now that I have you in my hands again, have I done anything to hurt you? But you repay all my friendship by turning your back upon me."

"I didn't know," said Cuddy, subdued for a moment; but he added, in a defiant tone, "You was going to give it me about them apples."

"No, Cuddy; I was sorry that you should have done it. I said it was wrong, and you know as well as I do that it was wrong. If I was to put my

hand into your pocket at this moment, and take away all you have in it, would it not be wrong? Don't be afraid, your pockets are safe for me; but I want you to see that you did just as wrong in taking Mrs. Roberts' apples. Come now," added Caleb, "you won't treat me so any more, will you, Cuddy? and you will come and see me to-morrow when I am driving the cows?"

Cuddy made no answer, but his face looked softer in the moonlight. As they stood, the sweet notes of the hymn, "Abide with me," floated out from the building beside them.

"How pretty!" said Caleb. "'Tis a pity to do anything to spoil it,—and Miss Carter so good and kind as she is. You won't come disturbing any more, Cuddy?"

"Did she send you out to whop me?" asked Cuddy.

"No, indeed; she never wants to hurt anybody. Come you in with me, and let us hear the end of this hymn aright, and you will see she will be as kind as anything."

But this was too much for Cuddy. Drawing himself out of Caleb's loosened hold, he went away, not at his usual gallop, but slowly, as one who is considering some deep matter. Caleb returned into the lighted room alone.



CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW CURATE'S WAYS.



THE next morning was so wet that Caleb doubted whether Cuddy would come out. There he sat, however, on a gate, swinging one stockingless leg and peeling a switch as calmly as if it were a fine summer's day.

"Mother wouldn't let Nanny go out," he remarked, jumping down.

"I don't wonder. I did not much think to see you here on such a morning," said Caleb.

"Oh, I had to come. I never thought. I wanted to tell you I wouldn't run away from you again."

Thereupon Caleb began at once upon what was uppermost in his mind, urging Cuddy to come with Nanny to Sunday school. Cuddy grew restless, and tried to turn the subject, and at last said,—

"I can't, and there's an end on't. It's very well for some people, but not for the likes of us. Why, the children look upon Nanny and me as no better than tramps. If you go on any more"—for Caleb was beginning again—"I'll just run off home."

"Do," said Caleb, laughing; "it is the best thing you could do, before you get soaked through. And, Cuddy, make me another stick like the one you were peeling that pretty pattern; it is just the sort of thing I want for keeping the calf back from following the cows up home."

Cuddy's face brightened again, he tossed Caleb a dripping nod, gathered his rags together, and scampered away down the lane.

The stick was duly presented next day, and Spottle again came up in Nanny's arms, to be praised and stroked this time, much to her little mistress's satisfaction, if not to her own, for she evidently thought a boy a very alarming animal, and was relieved when the interview was over. Nanny sidled up to Caleb much as her cat might have done, and listened to his cunningly devised praise of the warmth and comfort of the schoolroom on these raw, damp mornings. She, poor child, would willingly have smoothed back her wild locks, and washed her face, and gone, as Caleb wished, to Sunday school; but Cuddy did not approve, so of course it could not

be. She liked the look of the kind lady, and then it was so dull at home. She took to hanging about the gate at Hillside to watch the lady go in and out, sometimes alone, sometimes beside her father's invalid chair. Miss Carter noticed the little face that she had never seen either in church or school, and one day she stopped and spoke to Nan. The result was that Miss Carter offered to teach Nanny to read, if she would come to her every evening at dusk; and Nanny returned home in such a state of delight that it could hardly be checked, even by Cuddy's very doubtful consent to her going. They should have no more fun together, he said, and she would grow stupid and tame, just like an old cat. But Nanny assured him that she would be as wild as ever at other times. So for once Nanny had her way.

A new minister came to the parish at Christmas, named Mr. Brice, a stranger to those parts. He was much shocked, as well he might be, at the harm done by that back-parlour spirit-shop at Llanfair, and by the drunken, godless, wretched lives of many even in his own parish. He set himself to preach vehemently against it, boldly denouncing vice, and warning people so earnestly against drinking and bad company, that Caleb thought it must surely do some good. Yet his preaching was such as people think good for others, rather than feel moved by it

themselves; and Caleb, while he approved, yet felt much more drawn by Miss Carter's loving tone.

"That ought to do good to some," he observed to old Patience, as they came out from one of the curate's earnest denunciations of vice.

"Ay, sure," said the old woman; "and he is a right good young man, but I doubt if he has got hold yet of the real best way. What was that story you were telling us about the power of love and the iceberg, Patty?"

"It was a story John read out of one of the library books," said Patty. "It said there was a great big iceberg like a mountain that had to be done away, and an angel came to try could he do it. And he got a lot of giants to come and pick at it with their pickaxes for years and years, to break it to pieces, but they couldn't; it only got bigger, because of the snow that fell upon it. And he lighted a great huge bonfire on it, but it only made a little black mark in the middle. Then he tried wrapping it up in hot furs, and everything he could think of; but it was all no good, and at last he had to give it up. Then, the story says, God sent a wind that floated the iceberg down from the cold north, down into warm seas and sunshine. And then you could not exactly see how, but it just melted away and was gone."

"I like that story," said Caleb. "Melting does better than hammering, I know that."

"But mind you," said Patience, "we have no right to judge our neighbour; and a good man and earnest he is, I am sure. The Lord has different kinds of work in His vineyard, and different kinds of workers to do it,—some bold and zealous like Peter, and some gentle and loving like John; and He knows and accepts all their work that is done for His sake. What are we doing for Him, that we should talk?"

Caleb saw Mr. Brice pass down the lane from time to time on his way to the Tims' cottage, but he never had any private speech with him until one day when Mr. Brice called to him across the hedge, and asked whether he knew anything of his neighbours down there, pointing towards the Tims' cottage. Caleb answered that he did.

"That's well," said Mr. Brice. "You are the first person in the village who has confessed to an acquaintance with them. What have they done that they should be so unkindly treated? What sort of a fellow is Tim?"

"It is only the two little ones, Cuddy and Nanny, that I know anything of, sir," said Caleb; for he knew nothing good to say of Tim.

"Ah, that boy Cuddy I can do nothing with,"

observed Mr. Brice; "he is a regular little 'ne'er-do-weel;' but I have great hopes of Tim. I believe he has been very unfairly treated by the rest of you, and I mean to bring him forward and make a fine fellow of him yet. I shall do it."

"I am glad to hear it, sir," replied Caleb.

Then Mr. Brice asked him a few questions about himself, told him that he was going to start a cricket club, and should expect him to join, and went away up the lane swinging his stick.

"A pleasant-spoken gentleman," thought Caleb; "but he will do wonders if he really gets Tim Tims out of that drinking, poaching set that he and his father are in. Which way will he begin?"

The way Mr. Brice began, as far as bringing Tim forward went, was to come to the Friday practising with Tim at his side. He went close up to Miss Carter, and Tim followed, and took Caleb's usual place while he was gone to fetch some chant-books. Mr. Brice beat time loudly, and expressed a dislike to some of the favourite old tunes, and accused them of a slovenly way of chanting, and altogether went far, so Caleb thought, to spoil the evening. But perhaps his temper was ruffled by being turned out of his seat, for Miss Carter smiled and answered quietly, and did not seem in the least put out by this interference. Some of the other lads felt as he

did, for as they went out he heard them saying, "If Mr. Brice and that fellow Tim come next practising night, I shall stop away."

"And I too ; why can't he leave things be?"

Mr. Brice did not "leave things be," and the attendance at the singing school fell off. Caleb continued to go, because he thought it unfair on Miss Carter to desert her; and he succeeded in persuading a few waverers to follow his example. Before long, Tim made his appearance in church, taking his seat among the singers, to their evident annoyance. But Mr. Brice looked so pleased, that Caleb tried to believe that it was all right.

"Cuddy, you really ought to come now to church and school," he said, the first time that he met him after this. "See how Tim is throwing off all his bad ways."

Cuddy gave a short laugh. "And putting on all Mr. Brice's old coats," he said, "and getting coal and flannel, and the money for the doctor's bill the last time father got the quinsy with a bad drinkin' bout."

Caleb looked puzzled. "That does not hinder its being a good thing to turn over a new leaf. Come and try it once, Cuddy ; you don't know how pleasant it is."

"Leave you me be," said Cuddy, turning his back. "Tim may do as he likes, and be black one day

and white another. I wouldn't go afore, and I won't now still more."

"Suppose you were to go to Miss Carter," persisted Caleb; for he saw that the boy looked restless and unhappy, and longed to help him. "What a deal of good she has done to Nanny!—and she would have you, I know."

But Cuddy shook his head. "It will do for Nan, but I ain't fit, not I. If it wasn't for Nan I'd run off and go to sea like Jim, so there!" And before Caleb could find words to reply, Cuddy was off at his old pace, whooping and prancing down the lane.





CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE FRED.



ALEB went his way, turning Cuddy's words over and over in his mind; but an addition to Mrs. Roberts' household occurred just then, and gave him so much to think of that poor perverse Cuddy and his troubles were half forgotten.

A few days before this he had found Jenny in such a state of mind that nothing he could do was right. He drew himself, as usual when this was the case, into as small a space as possible, and waited till Jenny should have worked it off. Presently she began. "Here's a bother! You don't care; it won't hurt you, but I can't think how missis could think of such a thing; but you never can tell what them foreigners will be up to next. Thank goodness, I ain't a foreigner."

"Why, what's the matter?" said Caleb.

"The matter! missis is going to take a lodger, that's the matter. Yes, you may look, but it isn't all. It's going to be a little boy from India,—a foreigner too, most like. There's a worry it 'll be, bathing and feeding and running after'n from morning till night."

"Who is he? Are you to have the charge of him, then?" asked Caleb.

"Who else should? you?" retorted Jenny. "Missis was out asking me would I have in a girl to wait on him, or would I have my wages rose and do it myself. Likely I'd want a girl in, poking and prying all about. No, thank you!"

"Well, I think missis could not have spoken fairer," said Caleb.

"Oh yes, you always set missis in the right;" and then Jenny, amid many grumbles and growls, told him how Miss Carter had been to see her mistress about it; that this child was some relation to her, and his parents were in India, and he had been sent to England with his little sister, but she had died, and the place whither he was sent did not seem to agree with him. Miss Carter could not take a child into her own house, on account of her invalid father. "He's getting real *dotty*, by all accounts," added Jenny; but she had come and begged Mrs. Roberts to take him in for a bit until his parents

came home in the summer; and so the spare room had got to be cleaned, and the jam-pots put somewhere else, and many things were upset, Jenny's temper among the rest.

Caleb had harnessed the dog-cart that day for Mr. Roberts to go to the station to meet their little visitor, and while his talk with Cuddy took place he was waiting to hold the horse on their return.

A little pale face looking out from a gray shawl was all that Caleb saw that evening; and for two or three days he only caught glimpses of the new visitor through the window, quiet and still, confirming Jenny's report that he was just like an old man, and would die soon himself, as likely as not. One sunny morning, as Caleb was preparing a bed for spring seeds, he saw little Master Fred coming down the garden carrying a toy horse in his hand, to the mouth of which he held a blade of grass.

"Do eat it, Prancer," he heard him saying; "it is beautiful fresh grass. No, you have not touched it, and you have eaten nothing since you came here. I wish I knew what to do for you."

"Perhaps he is thirsty with his journey, Master Fred," said Caleb, with great gravity. "Will you try him with a little water?"

Master Fred agreed eagerly, and trotted after Caleb to a little pool made by the bucket between

the stones at the stable door. Prancer's nose was plunged in this long enough for him to have taken a good draught, and came out dripping very satisfactorily. Meantime Caleb cut a little heap of grass with his pocket knife, and recommended that Prancer should be left to consume it at his leisure. That was the way horses liked to be fed, he said. Little Fred was delighted. Mr. Roberts had never so much as looked at Prancer. Mrs. Roberts had told him that horses like his never could eat; Jenny had threatened to cut his head off if ever she found him left about; but here was somebody who understood.

"You are the man that takes care of the horses, are not you?" he said, following Caleb back to his work. "I think I'll let you have Prancer sleep with you; he will be safe there, and then you will know if he ought to have anything to eat in the night."

"All right, Master Fred," said Caleb.

Caleb was very busy that evening manufacturing a stable for Prancer out of an old blacking-box. He had to work in the knife-shed because Jenny objected to a litter, but his interest in the work kept him warm. He put up a manger, and filled it with hay, and cut some straw short for litter, and even put in a bit of string for the halter. Little Fred's pale face flushed with delight when

he saw it, and he flung his arms round Caleb's neck to thank him in the way that he had always been accustomed to show his thanks. Caleb had won the heart of the lonely little fellow, and he was quite content now if he might but trot about after him from house to garden and from field to yard. Mrs. Roberts was content too, for she knew that Caleb might be trusted, and she was glad enough to get the child off her hands.

"I thought I never could manage children," reflected Caleb; "but it seems they don't want managing; just treat them as if they were reasonable beings, and reasonable they are." But the truth was that Caleb was learning to be kindly affectioned towards all, in his continued efforts to be like his loving Master; and the child knew, as children do, that he need not fear any coldness or want of sympathy in him; Caleb would always "understand."

"I have had a letter from my mother," he said, when he joined Caleb one morning. "She is in India, a long, long way off, but she is coming by-and-by. Where is your mother, Caleb?"

"A still longer way off, Master Fred, and she will never come to me. She is in heaven."

"That is where little Lily went to. Miss Carter says God took her there. But I did not want her to go; I cried. Did you want your mother to go?"

"No indeed, Master Fred."

"Then you were as bad as me; it is not kind, because you know it's much nicer in heaven. I wonder whether your mother met Lily there; do you think she knows her?"

"I shouldn't wonder," replied Caleb, somewhat puzzled at the turn the conversation had taken. "I know they are both with the Lord Jesus there, for it says that they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night, and He that sits on the throne dwells among them."

"Do you think Jesus takes little children up in His arms, as He did when He was here among men?" asked Fred, after a pause.

"I am sure of it," said Caleb, "because He loves them; and He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

"Then I dare say He has taken Lily," said Fred. "I should so like to go there, should not you? right up, up to heaven."

"Now, Master Fred? Why, it would be very, very happy; but Miss Carter says that people who sit down and groan, and say they are tired of this world, and want to be at rest, are no better than if a labourer should sigh and grumble and say he wanted to go home, instead of finishing his day's work. God keeps us here because He has got work

for us to do here, and He will know the right time for us to give over."

"I am afraid I sat down and groaned yesterday when it was raining, and I could not come out," said little Fred. "But I have got no work to do."

"Oh yes, Master Freddy. You have to be good, and to try to please God, and to grow better every day. And you have your lessons to learn, to make you fit for work that you will do when you are a man, please God."

Master Fred's air of grave attention suddenly vanished as he spied puss coming towards him among the cabbages, and he ran off for a game of play with her.

This was only the first of many such conversations. Little Fred, after standing gazing up into the clouds with his clear dark eyes, would come out with some such question as, "Caleb, what are angels like, and what do they do?" and Caleb, who had never thought about angels at all, must answer as best he could, sometimes being forced to confess his ignorance, and hunting out an answer in his Bible, to be given next day. This intercourse with little Fred helped greatly to soften Caleb's rugged nature. He grew very fond of the child, and when he carried him on his shoulder over muddy places, or felt the little hand

confidingly thrust into his own, his heart melted, and he could not have answered even Sam otherwise than mildly if he had met him then.

It was during a short illness of little Fred that Caleb, praying for his recovery, remembered with shame that he had never prayed for him before. Nay, when he came to consider it, he never prayed for any one but himself. He said indeed, "Bless my father and all my friends," as his mother had taught him to do when first he lisped his prayers at her knee, but it was without putting much meaning to the words. His prayers were, "Forgive me, help me, guide me:" was that right? was that how his Master did? Caleb felt sure that it was not, as he called to mind the prayer for His disciples, "And not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." And the prayer which Jesus had taught, how wide its meaning was! and how far short had he fallen in using it, as he did, as though each petition was for himself alone! "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,"—why, that included not one's friends and neighbours only, but the whole earth. "I'm selfish; what have I been doing all this time?" thought Caleb, in dismay at his own shortcomings; and from that time forth all in his old home, all in his present place, Miss Carter, Master Fred, Cuddy and Nanny, the whole village, the world itself, were

included in his petitions. And he, at any rate, felt the better and happier for so doing.

One day little Fred came out dancing with glee, feet and eyes and all. "Guess what I have got to tell you, Caleb, guess."

"That you have heard from your father and mother, Master Freddy, and they are coming home."

"Clever Caleb! how well you have guessed! Yes, they are on the sea, sailing, sailing along to England to come to me. But now guess where they are going to live—where *we* are going to live, I mean!" cried Freddy, jumping up and down.

But this Caleb could not tell, and little Fred was too eager to give him long to think.

"We have taken the house here, Caleb—the big house among the trees that has got nobody to live in it—and Miss Carter says she will put in three beds and three plates and three chairs,—no, four, because Cousin Gaynor is coming,—and we must buy the rest when they come." The tone in which little Fred said "we" was grand to hear.

It was quite true that Mr. Lloyd, on returning to his own country, had thought that he could not do better than take a house in a spot that seemed to suit his delicate and only remaining child so well, and where he should be near to his excellent cousin, Miss Carter. He had therefore begged her to take the house

for him on a three years' lease, intending, if it suited them, to buy it and settle down there for the rest of his life.

Little Fred's delight now was to go with Miss Carter to the empty house and desolate garden, and watch the preparations in the way of scrubbing and weeding that were made for the new-comers; it seemed to help on their coming. His talk was all on this subject; and Caleb, pleased that his little friend was not going out of reach, entered heartily into it all. Another person was also filled with delight at the prospect of the new family that was coming, and this was Nanny. She burst over the gate one evening quite in Cuddy's old style, and rushed across the field to Caleb with such force that she had to fling herself against the bank in order to stop.

"I'm real mad to-day," she said, in answer to Caleb's inquiry of what was up now. "I can't bring it down nohow. I've run up to the turnpike three times and back, as hard as I could tear, but nothing will do. Hold me, Caleb, or I'll be off again!"

"Nonsense!" said Caleb, laughing; "hold on by that ash bough, and tell me what has put you in such spirits."

"Why, then, I'm going to be errand-girl to Mrs. Lloyd at the big house, and clean the knives, and peel the potatoes, and run to the post, and do all whatever

they tell me; and Miss Carter's going to teach me till they come—so there!" cried Nanny, all in one breath; and she danced a sort of war-dance round Caleb in her delight, waving a ragwort that she had pulled up by the roots.

"There's nice for you!" said Caleb. "Why, you are made now; only be a good girl. Are you not glad now that you went to Miss Carter and kept on so steady?"

"I should think I am!" returned Nanny. "And I am to have a new print frock, only I must make the skirt of it myself."

"Is not Cuddy glad too?" said Caleb. "I have not seen him this long time."

"Cuddy! He's not glad for anything now," said Nanny, the merriment dying out of her face. "Father and Tim's carrying on dreadful again, out all night sometimes, and I do think Cuddy's going to be so bad as them."

"Oh, Nanny! not drinking?"

"No, not as I knows; but he's got with a lot of the Llanfair boys, and he don't care for me to be with him now. He used to read with me every night the books Miss Carter gave me, but he don't care for nothing now. I'm glad I shan't be home now scarce any, except for meals. And speaking only makes him worse; he's real savage, but may be he'd mind you."

“What do you think it is that’s come over him, Nanny?”

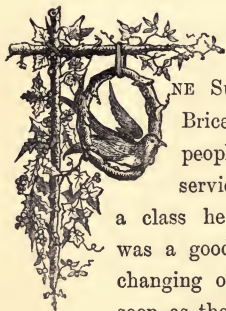
“I don’t know, not I. I fancy it’s because he don’t say no prayers. I didn’t use to neither, and then I would feel, times and again, as if nobody cared, and I might so well be bad as not. But first I seen you cared, that was the beginning; and then Miss Carter she taught me, and I pray regular, and it makes you—you know the feeling—as if God was looking after you always.”

“Pray for Cuddy too,” said Caleb. “We’ll have him a good boy yet, God helping.”





CHAPTER VIII.



CALEB VISITS THE OLD HOME.

ONE Sunday about this time Mr. Brice invited any of the young people to come to him after the service and enter their names for a class he was going to hold. There was a good deal of whispering and exchanging of glances among the lads as soon as they were out of church. "Who will go?" "Are you going to put your name?" "I would be willing enough if I knew that Tim was to be kept out." "No chance." "Well, if he comes forward I won't. I aren't going to mix myself up with him."

"And I aren't going to let him interfere with what

I want to do," said Caleb, stoutly; "it's making too much account of him."

"Be you going to give your name in?"

"Ay."

"So will I," said John Davies, Patty's brother.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Brice, coming out into the porch, pencil in hand. "I have got the name of the farmer's eldest son at my lodging, and Timothy Tims. Who else will come forward?"

One or two of the elder lads who usually led the rest drew away, and the group fell apart. Caleb looked at John, who came nearer and whispered, "Mother says I ought."

"So would mine; and besides, 'tis right," said Caleb, and stepped forward. John did the same, and two or three waverers followed their example; the rest dispersed with all speed, to avoid encountering the curate.

On the following Sunday, however, Miss Carter talked about it in the Sunday school, and explained so well the advantages of the class, that several more gave in their names. Miss Carter promised to make a class for the girls, and begged the boys to attend regularly at the one Mr. Brice was about to form. It opened on the following Monday evening; and, to Caleb's great satisfaction, Tim was not there, and most of the other boys were.

"How didst like it?" asked old Patience, when he met her in the village street next day.

"Better than I thought to do," replied Caleb. "He's a deal nicer so than in the pulpit; he did not keep on about wickedness and everybody going to the bad; he talked to us quite friendly about the difficulties we should have, and the strength we should want to meet them, and how best we could come by it. But he kept looking at the door all the first part, and I think he was main vexed because Tim never came after all."

"Ay, he thought he'd done a great work, but I fear me he will reap nought but disappointment there," said Patience; "there's no root of goodness in Tim, so that he can but endure for a while. I was up with the cramp last night when the moon was setting, and I seen Tim and his father go by, both of them reeling drunk."

Had Mr. Brice seen them too? Certain it was that from that day Tim came no more to church and singing school; and on the following Sunday Mr. Brice preached a sermon, almost startling in its vehemence, upon deceit and hypocrisy. Many people smiled as they said they could guess what that meant; but Caleb had no heart to do so, he was sorry for the zealous, hard-working minister, whom he was learning to like as well as to respect.

Caleb felt that he was growing in knowledge, and in the desire for spiritual grace and wisdom; and with it there grew an earnest longing to go home, and, if it might be, to make all straight with his father. And one morning, when Mr. Roberts came out as usual to give directions for the day's work, Caleb asked his permission to go and spend two nights at home.

"Why?" asked Mr. Roberts; "is your father ill?"

"No, sir; when I have heard of him now and again from a neighbour on fair days, he has been going on as usual. Only we did not part the best of friends, and I should like to see him, if you could spare me, sir: the seedlings are all planted out, and the beans and peas stuck; there is nothing special now till the potatoes come to be earthed up, and——"

"Of course I will spare you," said his master; "you are quite right to go. Only do not be away more than three days, for Mr. Lloyd and his family are expected towards the end of the week."

Caleb promised, and having, by Mr. Roberts' desire, made arrangements for the work during his absence, he set off. A line of rail carried him within five hours' walk of his old home, so that he could easily do the journey in one day. How familiar and yet how strange the country looked, as he drew near to his old home. Now many doubts began to lay

hold of him as to whether he did well, after all, to come.

"Perhaps father is still vexed against me; perhaps he would sooner me not to come troubling: *she* would, I know. If he should look annoyed I shall wish I had never come." Then Caleb remembered his boastful hope, when first he left home, of returning rich and prosperous like Jacob. True, his feelings were altered since then, and he had no wish now to triumph, but yet—would it not be better to turn back after all? or to go to one of the neighbours first, and feel his way?

Better! he roused himself and shook off the cowardly mood. "The better way is what God would like one to do, and I know which that is, for Jesus says, 'Leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.'"

Caleb stopped and clasped his hands; he did not pray in words, but he lifted up his heart to the Father who seeth in secret, and then went bravely on.

There was the old whitewashed roof, there were the fields he knew so well. They looked bare and half-fed, Caleb thought; he would like to tell his father Mr. Roberts' plans of manuring. No one in the field nor in the garden; and he would rather

have caught his father alone first. The cattle raised their heads as he passed ; they did not know him ; the fowls were scratching in the yard as usual. As he opened the well-known gate the past year of his life seemed to vanish, and Caleb felt as though he were returning home after a few hours' absence, as he had so often done, and he should find his mother waiting to welcome him, with the kettle singing on the hob, and her work laid aside on the old settle at the sound of his step. Oh, mother ! mother ! it is through the gate of heaven that your boy must go to meet your welcome now ; but you too would be well pleased with what he is about to do. There was the window through which he had so often glanced to make sure that she was there, and that his father was not, before he burst joyously in : now it was his father that he hoped to find. Yes, he was there ; they seemed to be all sitting at tea ; this was bad. Caleb knocked hard at the door, with a desperate feeling that he was in for it, and did not care what might happen. He heard the scrape of a chair pushed back, and a voice cried, " Who's there ? "

Caleb lifted the latch. " It is I, father ; I am come to see how you are. May I come in ? "

His father stepped quickly out and brought him in. His face was working as though he would have cried,

but he only said, "Come in, lad, and have a cup of tea.—Martha, another cup."

Caleb shook hands and sat down. Sam scowled, but what did that matter? "Can you give me a bed?" he said, addressing the table in general. "Master said I might spend a day here, and then I must go back."

"Oh, then you are not returned on our hands," said Martha Price, with a half-laugh of embarrassment. "I made sure you were come to ask to be took back."

"Never fear; I shall not stop long, I am wanted at my place," replied Caleb, his temper rising. How easily he still might be provoked! he must be more careful; he might have made a better answer than that.

"Tell us about your place, lad," said his father; and Caleb told, trying with tolerable success not to be ruffled by the remarks made by Sam and his mother.

"You will get on," said the farmer, at last; "and so you should, so steady as you have been."

"It's easy to make yourself out fine in talking," growled Sam.

"Come and see the calves if you have finished tea," said his father; and Caleb gladly rose, and they went out together.

"Caleb," said his father, as they stood looking at a little black three weeks old bull, "I have been main sorry after you. I found it was not your doing, leaving the gate, and all the rest; it was Sam all along. I did not do by you as I ought."

"Don't, father!" said Caleb. "It was a great deal of it my fault, not behaving and answering as I ought. And I came over meaning to ask you would you forgive me, and let us be friends?"

The farmer said nothing—perhaps he could not—but he laid his arm on the boy's shoulder; it was the first caress that Caleb could ever remember receiving from him. His arm stole up round his father in answer, and so they stood, still gazing to all appearance at the black calf, which looked at them with wide bluish eyes, much wondering that they offered him no milk.

The farmer was the first to break the silence. "I do miss you," he said, "more than a little. Sam is not half the fellow I took him for; he has underhand ways. He cheats me, Caleb. Whisht!" as Caleb uttered an exclamation. "I can't tell if his mother knows it or not, but he cheats me. Caleb, don't you breathe a word of it,"—here he lowered his voice to a whisper; "I've made a will, I done it two months back, I have left the farm and everything to you, lad. They think they have got the old man;

but they will find out after I'm dead that I was up to more than they think for."

"Oh, father!" cried Caleb, "I don't want anything of the sort. I only want to be friends with you, and to meet now and then, and care for one another, and write if there is anything to tell."

"We will, lad, we will. Let's go in now, or they will be thinking there's something up. You can stop over to-morrow with me?"

When Caleb came to look at his father he found him aged a good deal, thinner and greyer, and less active in his movements. He was evidently kept in order by his wife, who looked much as she used to do; but Sam had acquired a look of cunning that showed through his sullen air, and made Caleb feel uncomfortable in his presence. He went out to work with his father the next morning, and did a good day's work, for there was much that wanted doing. The two kept together all day, and Caleb told much of what he had been taught by Mr. Roberts.

"You are as strong as a man now," said his father, admiringly; "you have come on past belief since you left us; and what a deal your master seems to have learned you! Sam is good at a bargain, but main idle when it comes to working, and he don't tend the cattle half like you did. I have a hard pinch to get on, and the tarm is not what it ought to be, for all my striving."

“Father, would you like to have me back?” said Caleb; “say the word, and I will come.” He did not speak on the spur of the moment, he had turned it over and over the night before; he knew that he should lose a good place, and a good education for his future life; he must leave many friends whom he loved, and must meet much that was unpleasant at home: but he had slept upon it and prayed upon it, and had made up his mind that if his father wished it, it ought to be done.

The farmer’s face brightened, and he was about to speak, but he hesitated. “No, lad, no,” he said, at last. “It would but lead to trouble. Best leave it as it is; I will shuffle on while I can, and the farm will be yours, mind you, every blade and hoof upon it.”

“Don’t you now, father; there is no need to think of that for years to come. Suppose if I was to send you word when Mr. Roberts tells me anything that I think would come useful? And if things should change, and you did want me any time——”

“I’ll send to you, lad, and thank you for your offer; but it’s best as it is.” The farmer looked in his face, and then turned hastily away, saying, “God bless thee, lad! thou art growing like thy mother.”

With that Sam broke in upon them to call them to supper, and their private talk was at an end. Three times that day had he come upon them for

some trifling errand, as though jealous that they should talk together long undisturbed. No, it would lead to no one's happiness that Caleb should return home as things were now ; and he was relieved to find that he need not do so ; yet his heart yearned over the sad, lonely father, who had made his bed to please himself, and now found it so hard to lie on, and whose tongue said so little and his rugged face so much, as he pressed the boy's hand and bade him "Good-bye till we meet again."

With a lightened heart Caleb walked the fifteen miles back to the railway, and took train for Llanfair. What cared he if Sam had found work for the horse that could not be put off, because his father had proposed to give him a lift on his way ; and if Martha Price had put in no word of assent when his father bade him come and see them soon again ? He had done as his Master would have him do ; he was reconciled with his father, and he might come now and offer his vows, well assured that God would accept him.

Mr. Roberts came out to welcome him back when he heard that he was come home ; Jenny put a bit of meat to warm for his supper ; little Fred sent a message, brought by Mrs. Roberts herself, that Caleb would come and bid him good night before he fell asleep ; everybody seemed glad to have him back, and Caleb went to bed with renewed resolution to serve well both his heavenly Master and his earthly one.



CHAPTER IX.

NEW ARRIVALS AND AN UPSET.



THE following day was a day of excitement and bustle. In the morning came a van full of furniture to Tresaith House, and in the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd were expected. As soon as Caleb could be spared, Mr. Roberts sent him up to the house, that he might help to arrange the things, under Miss Carter's orders. Nanny was there, in her new print frock and white pinafore; but her hair was soon flying as wildly as ever, for Nanny was in one of her maddest moods. She came headlong downstairs as Caleb was standing to receive an order from Miss Carter, and nearly ran up against a half-unpacked crate of crockery.

"Gently, Nanny, gently," said Miss Carter; "keep yourself in order, child."

"I wish I could," returned Nanny, looking up at Miss Carter with a droll air of penitence. "I don't know what ever I can do to stop myself, except I goes and breaks something. I've a been all round the stables and places, running for life, and when that didn't do, I went into the sawpit and swung myself by my hands."

"And has that done you no good?"

"Not a morsel! S'pose I'll quiet down somehow."

Master Fred was a great contrast to Nanny. He stood by Miss Carter's side, paler than usual and very silent, clinging to her wherever she went, with a look almost of alarm in his wide-open eyes.

But when the carriage, after many a false rumour of wheels, really drove up to the door, the two children seemed to have changed places. Nanny stood like a little post in the background, while Freddy, with flushed cheeks, stretched his arms from the door-step and sprang to meet the gentleman who jumped first out of the carriage. Mr. Lloyd, after a hearty hug, passed him on to his mother, who took him into the house, and then Caleb, putting his head into the carriage to see whether everything had been taken out, nearly came up against a young lady who was stepping out with her arms full of things. This must be the Cousin Gaynor whom Master Freddy had mentioned; and very pretty Caleb thought her, as she smilingly gave up to him part of her load. So thought the whole village, after they had

appeared in church on Sunday, filling the long empty pew, and giving a comfortable, inhabited look to the chancel.

But how ill Mr. Brice looked that Sunday! anxious and out of spirits, and even giving out the hymns as though he thought nobody had any right to be joyful. There were reports passed from one to the other after church that Mr. Brice had been to the Tims' cottage, that he had charged them to their faces with all manner of evil practices, that he and Tim had had a regular quarrel, and that Tim had used bad language to the curate, and had even threatened to make the place too hot to hold him. Another report followed in a few days, that Mr. Brice had informed against Tims the father for keeping dogs without a licence; then that he had had Tim taken up and put in the lock-up for being drunk and disorderly in Llanfair Street.

Caleb was preparing a bed for carnation cuttings for Mrs. Roberts a day or two after these reports reached them, when his master came to her and said, "Mr. Brice has been here. (Go on with your work, Caleb; it is no secret.) He wants to be little Fred's successor."

"How so?" asked Mrs. Roberts, laying down her basket of cuttings.

"He asks to be allowed to occupy our spare room for a fortnight or so until he has time to look about him for a new lodging. He promises to give as little trouble as possible, and he says if Jenny could attend

upon little Fred she could attend upon him, since he would require much less looking after."

"There is trueness there," said Mrs. Roberts, with an air of consideration; "but for what does he leave the farm? Remember you how when first he went there it was all that is good?"

"Ah! it is all the baby," said Mr. Roberts, smiling; "he says it makes so much noise that he cannot stand it. But my belief is that he has advised and reproved them and interfered with their ways, until they will not stand it."

"Oh, my dear, will he want to interfere and reprove and advise in your way? You will not like that!"

Mr. Roberts shrugged his shoulders. "I might be tempted to advise him in return, which is always a foolish thing to do." He drew his wife's arm within his, and they walked up and down the path talking, as they often did, in another language.

Caleb watched, and wondered whether Mr. Brice was to come. For his part he should be glad. He missed little Fred greatly, although he often came down from the big house to see Mrs. Roberts, and always stopped to have a chat with Caleb; and Mrs. Roberts missed him too. She would be all the better for having some one else to think of; and poor Mr. Brice looked as if he sadly wanted a little care and kindness. Jenny's temper, when he went into the kitchen, was a plain

proof that Mr. Brice was coming. If Master Fred's coming had been bad, Mr. Brice's was ten times worse, and before long Jenny was almost storming at him. He had brought nothing but trouble into the parish ; he had been the ruin of Tim, taking him up and making much of him only to clap him into the lock-up.

"It is drink is the ruin of Tim, not Mr. Brice," said Caleb.

"Speak about what you understand," retorted Jenny. "I know what I know. He's a troublesome, interfering fellow that they would not keep on at the farm at no price, and then to go and come here, of all places! And missis telling me I must be so particular and make things nice for him."

Caleb soon made his escape, and took his *Farmer's Chronicle* to read out of doors by the waning light.

Some of Mr. Brice's boxes arrived the very next day; and on the following afternoon he appeared with the rest of his things. Caleb carried them upstairs, uncorded the boxes, and asked whether he could do anything else.

"Can I have a cup of tea up in my room?" said Mr. Brice.

Jenny was nowhere to be found, so Caleb made the tea and a piece of toast, as he had often done for his mother in old days, found cup and plate and tray, and carried them up. Mr. Brice was sitting with an air of utter weariness beside an open box of books.

"Let me take out those books, sir, while you drink your tea," said Caleb, and went to work at once.

"You are a good fellow," said Mr. Brice. Then he went on, in another tone, "Have you seen anything of the Tims since?"

"No, sir, nothing."

"It is a sad thing to say of any one," continued Mr. Brice, "but I believe those Tims are utterly reprobate, every one of them. I can do nothing with them. It is hopeless work."

"Not with quite all, sir," Caleb ventured to say, wishing to find some word of consolation. "There's Nanny Tims; since Miss Carter was so kind to her, she is turning out to be quite a steady little maid. And Cuddy, I believe something might have been made of him too——"

"What hindered it?" asked Mr. Brice as Caleb paused.

"Me, sir. I spoke sharply to him once when I ought to have done just contrary-ways, and it spoiled all."

"It may not have been that which did it," said the curate, looking up with some surprise. "St. Paul bade Titus rebuke vice sharply; why do you imagine that you were in the wrong?"

"Well, sir, I do think it. It is not the way that Jesus did; He spoke kindly to all who came, even to the woman that had led a bad life; and I know I was not trying then to be meek and lowly like Him. I

have had no chance again; but I don't give up all hope of Cuddy yet, sir."

The curate stretched out his hand for his Bible, and seemed about to reply; but he laid it down again, saying, "I have no time to go into the subject to-night. Thank you for your help, Caleb; I must be alone now."

The matter was not spoken of again; and Caleb could not find that Mr. Brice had made any attempt to win over Cuddy, as he had half hoped that he might. But Mr. Brice never passed in and out without a friendly word to him; and Caleb became more and more sorry for his anxious and dejected look, as he learned how much real kindness and good-will there was behind that reproving manner and those sermons of stern rebuke.

A parcel that Mr. Roberts wanted from the station took Caleb one day to Llanfair, a place he never went to if he could help it, especially on a fair day, when even more drinking than usual took place. To-day it was pig fair, and many carts with squealing occupants were going to and fro, and old women trying to drive their pigs home from market, and children running in between and tripping over the string, and men jostling and shouting; and in the midst of them Caleb saw Tim, who cried, "There goes the good boy! get'n a clean pinny to go to school in, a dear!"

Caleb hastened on out of the sound of the mocking laughter, and having with some difficulty found his

parcel amid the confusion of the station, he took a side street by which to return. Here he came upon Cuddy, tearing along at the head of a troop of boys, who were in full retreat before the one policeman of the place. Cuddy gave him a half-nod, but evidently had no mind to be spoken to, and Caleb sighed and refrained himself. Presently a cart passed along, the old horse stepping leisurely, the pigs squealing and swaying under the net. The boys set up a chorus of whistling and geeing, and every sort of sound that is used for sending horses on. On rattled the cart at a brisker pace, and John Williams, the Tresaith farmer, who was driving it, turned round and cried, "Thank ye, boys; you have done me a service with your hishing where you meant none."

The boys laughed and fell back; but the next cart which was driven by a woman, was served in the same way, to her evident annoyance. Caleb called out to Cuddy, asking him to help him to carry his parcel, in order to get him out of mischief, but the boy pretended not to hear. He would gladly have escaped from their neighbourhood, but they were now out on the high road, there was no other way, and Caleb could not walk very fast with his heavy parcel, so that the boys easily kept just ahead of him.

By-and-by a pony carriage passed, so laden with parcels that the driver was forced to walk beside it,

leaving only a lady half smothered in parcels on the front seat. The boys began to hoot again, and several ran to hang on behind. Caleb took advantage of this to call out, "Cuddy, Cuddy, stop that, or there will be mischief soon. Leave shouting, Cuddy!"

But Cuddy seemed to be deaf. The lady turned, saying, "Leave off, boys; the pony has quite enough to do without dragging you;" and, seeing that they did not seem inclined to obey, she flourished the whip, whereupon they fell back shouting and jeering. The pony fidgeted impatiently, and when the man at its side took a step, as though to go behind and scatter its tormentors, Caleb heard the lady say, "Never mind them; keep to her head, whatever happens."

"You can't reach to cut me!" cried one boy, running almost to the side of the carriage. The lady took no notice. "Whip behind!" shouted another; "there's half a dozen on 'em there!" The lady turned her head, a boy with a switch took the opportunity to run forward and give a cut at the pony, and only just escaped the spring that the coachman made at him from the other side. A perfect storm of shouts and hisses followed this exploit; the pony reared, shook itself, and dashed away; and in another moment the carriage was upset at the turning, the parcels all about the road, the pony in the ditch, and the lady nowhere. Yes, here she was under the car-

riage, her face terribly cut, and her clothes torn ; what further damage had been done to her it was impossible to tell ; but Caleb drew her out as gently as he could, while the coachman, trembling in every limb, unfastened the harness and helped the pony to rise. The boys had vanished as if by magic ; not one remained to send back for help. Only Cuddy had stolen behind Caleb while he drew the lady out, glanced awestruck at the pale, bleeding face that he had helped to mar, and then he too dashed away.

Help came, however. John Williams, jogging leisurely along, had been near enough to hear the shouting, the tumult, and the sudden stop ; and he came running back to see whether anything serious had happened. The lady was able to move, and sat in the road trying to stanch the blood that flowed from her face. The two men got the carriage up on its wheels again, and found it whole, though much scratched.

“Would it be best to go back into the town, or on home ?” said John Williams. “She can’t stay here.”

“Home, please,” said a girlish voice. “I have no bones broken ; it is only my head. But the pony——”

Caleb looked at the lady. It was Miss Gaynor, Master Fred’s pretty cousin. Oh the pity that it should be that sweet face that was so knocked about !

“The pony’s all of a shake, that’s certain,” said

the coachman; "but she'll not run off again. She's cut her knees. Oh! whatever shall we do?"

"Put your horse to the carriage, John Williams, and drive the young lady home," suggested Caleb, returning from the other side of the road with a little water that he had scooped up in a broken glass jug, probably the one that had cut her face so sadly.

"Horse wouldn't go in, shafts is too narrow," replied Williams.

"Please take me in your cart, then," said Miss Gaynor. "I shall not mind the shaking; but oh! I do feel so faint—let me get home."

"You must get in too, and hold her," said Caleb to the coachman.

"I can't," said the man. "I feel as if I had done it, in a way, by leaving go: don't ask me."

"Get you in," said Williams to Caleb. "The first thing is to get her home as quick as we are able." So they bundled out the pigs, and left them and the pony and carriage in the coachman's charge, promising to return to his help as soon as possible, put the young lady in as comfortably as they could, and set off along the darkening road. Very glad was Caleb when they stopped, after a longer time than he could have thought possible, at the door of Tresaith House, and Williams explained matters

to the startled maid, while Caleb lifted the young lady out, and, finding her too faint to stand, carried her into the hall. But when Mr. Lloyd came to meet them she raised her head and said, "It's no harm, Frederic, only I have tumbled down and cut my cheek; take me up to bed."

Then Mrs. Lloyd came running in, and Caleb left Miss Gaynor in their hands and went out to hasten to the coachman's help. A groom passed him as he went down, galloping to the town for a doctor.

Early the next morning Caleb went to inquire after Miss Gaynor. She was to remain in bed, and was much bruised, the maids said, and her face sadly cut about and swelled, but her eyes were not injured, and the doctor said she would be all right again after a bit. Mrs. Roberts called him in to tell her exactly how it had all happened, and Mr. Brice did the same; but to neither of them did Caleb mention Cuddy's share in the work. Poor naughty Cuddy, how wretched he must feel! He would hear from Nanny how Miss Gaynor went on, and Caleb wondered whether he had kept his misdeed from her knowledge. Most likely, for after the first day or two, when Miss Gaynor began to sit up again, Nanny recovered her gay spirits, and danced to and from the house as usual.



CHAPTER X.

MORE TROUBLES.



ALEB was going about his work gravely as usual next morning, when his attention was roused by a cry of distress. It came from a field a little distance off, and while he listened it was repeated, sharp and piercing, as of one in pain.

"What is it now?" he thought, as he set off quickly in that direction. "Not that pony again, surely. And, I hope, nothing of Cuddy's doing this time."

A shower came on, and beat in his face as he climbed the bank, to gain a view of the road and of the field beyond. Not Cuddy, but Nanny, met his gaze, lying on the grass in the field, and a cow walking away at some little distance, with

indignant twitchings of her tail. Caleb scrambled across.

"What is it, Nanny? are you hurt? did the cow toss you?"

The child stretched her arms to him, but did not attempt to get up. "No, no," she said; "but I thought to have a ride on her, and I drove her up to the bank and got on, and she went real steady a step or two, but then she shaked herself until she shaked me off, and as I was coming down she hove up her foot and kicked me, and I do believe she've a-kicked my leg right off!"

"Not quite so bad as that," said Caleb. "See, here it is, on right enough; let me see where it is hurt."

But Nanny screamed when he put his hand near it; she could not bear to have it touched, nor to move it herself, and the pain was evidently so great that Caleb feared there must be serious mischief. She could not remain here in the rain, and Caleb tried to lift her, but she could not endure her leg hanging down. He would have run for help, but she clung to him in terror lest the cow should return and kick her again. He tried to tie up the ankle with his handkerchief, but it was too small; at last he pulled off his jacket, and by its means succeeded in slinging her leg in such a manner that he was able to carry her home.

"Try to be as brave as Miss Gaynor," he said, when the child cried out with the pain. "We shall not be long; see, there is the door in sight.—Mrs. Tims! Mrs. Tims! Cuddy!"

No one answered, and Caleb carried Nanny into the empty house and laid her on the bed. "I must find somebody," he said.

"Cuddy is mostly down in the hollow the last days," said Nanny; and a few shouts in that direction presently brought him hurrying up. When he saw Caleb, however, he was about to turn back, but Caleb shouted, "Nanny is hurt! Fetch the doctor!"

Cuddy rushed past him into the house, and threw himself against the bed. "Nan, little Nan! who have hurt you? Was it father, or Tim?"

Caleb could hardly separate the children, or make Cuddy understand that something else was required to cure Nanny besides his soothings; they had always been his resource when she ran to him with complaints of knocks and beatings. But time pressed, and he pulled him outside the door and said, "I think her leg is broken; run quick for the doctor, for the longer it stays the worse it will be."

A look of horror came over Cuddy's face at these words. "Will he cut it off? Is she going to die?" he gasped out.

“Not a bit of it; he will mend it up, and make her all right again; only the sooner the better—run!”

Cuddy turned and was off like a shot, and Caleb went back to tell Nanny. “I would have gone instead,” he said, “only I must go back to my work. There are things waiting to be done, and I must not linger, but can I do anything for you before I go?”

Nanny asked to be more comfortably settled, then to have her boot cut off, then for a drink of water,—and, in short, found so many wants that Caleb saw she dreaded being left alone, and offered to run up and ask Miss Carter to come down before he went back to work. Nanny consented, and he was taking up his hat to go, when a rough voice cried, “Cuddy—Nan—sharp now, one of the both, or it will be the worse for you.”

“It’s Tim!” said Nanny, in a terrified whisper. “Oh, he’ll half murder me!”

“Come out, Nan; I see you are there by your hat,” went on Tim. “No use hiding from me, you will only catch it worse. Run you to the shop——”

“She cannot,” said Caleb, stepping forward. “She has fallen down and——”

Tim cut him short with an oath and advanced to the bed. “What’s the row now? Get out with you, you baggage, it’s all a sham!”

"No indeed, Tim. She has broken her leg, she cannot stir."

"Let's look," said Tim, stretching out his hand. Nanny screamed and shrank away.

Caleb stepped between. "Don't touch her; she cannot bear it. Cuddy is gone for the doctor."

Tim gave vent to his annoyance by some very unpleasant language, and then turned upon Caleb, asking what business he had there.

"I only stayed until somebody came to take care of Nanny," Caleb replied. "If you will do so now, or tell me where to find your mother, I am off."

Nanny caught hold of his sleeve, and turned her flushed, pleading face to Caleb. Tim bade him be off then, and her grasp tightened. Meantime he might be wanted for a hundred things at home; what was to be done?

"There ought to be some woman about her," he said. "Where's your mother?"

"'Tain't no business of your'n, so you be off," replied Tim. "We don't want no women, nor we don't want you neither."

"Thank you, I'll stop now till I hear what the doctor says," observed Caleb, politely; and Nanny squeezed his fingers in gratitude.

"You will? We'll see about that!" returned Tim, coming up to him. He was taller and bigger than

Caleb, but his frame was unstrung by the unwholesome life he led, while Caleb had the vigorous frame and steady eye of one who leads a sober, healthy, and active life, and Tim hesitated. While the two boys stood thus facing one another, the click of a horse's hoof was heard in the silence, and Nanny drew a long breath, exclaiming, "'Tis the doctor!"

Tim looked out, muttered an oath, and disappeared; he hated the doctor because he had told him plainly that he was bringing upon himself by his drunken habits disease and death. In another minute the doctor was in the room; Cuddy, who had kept pace with the horse all the way back, leaned panting against the doorpost; and old Mrs. Tims, with bonnet and bundle, was filling the place with questions and outcries until the doctor silenced her. There was no need of him now, and Caleb ran homewards, dismayed to see how low the sun was getting.

Mrs. Roberts was standing by the gate, and greeted him with an exclamation; his master was in the yard, having driven in the cows himself, and Mr. Brice met him with a reproachful "Caleb, Caleb! and this evening of all days to be wasting your time, or rather your master's time, in idleness!"

"And the rector of Llanfair has been here to see Mr. Brice, and nobody to hold his horse," said his mistress; "and I wanted to give him a cup of tea, and

no cows were brought in to milk, and Master Freddy has been to see you, and we have called all over the place. Where have you been?"

"I am sorry, ma'am, very sorry indeed, sir," began Caleb, as his master joined them; and then he told them all that had happened. His mistress was satisfied at once; of course he could not leave the poor girl until her mother came to her; and his master observed that he must send out an order to stop all accidents for the future, since Caleb had a knack of getting into the midst of them,—the one before this had nearly lost him his London parcel.

As Caleb sat reading in the saddle-room over the stable that night, a hasty step on the stones brought him to the door to see what was wanted. It was Cuddy, who rushed up as though he would have spoken, but turned aside and threw himself on his face upon the straw in the empty stall.

"Gracious, Cuddy! is Nanny worse? what is it?" cried Caleb. "Did not the doctor come to her?"

"Yes, yes, he've made her easy—it's not that," sobbed Cuddy. "Oh, Caleb, I wish as I was dead!"

Caleb now began to suspect that it was remorse which so moved Cuddy, and he drew him gently towards the bench, saying, "Come and sit down and tell me what grieves you so, and we will see what can be done."

But Cuddy threw himself on his knees by the bench and hid his face on his arms. "There's nothing can be done now," he said. "She've been down to our house to-day to see Nanny,—the young lady, you know, and her face is all scarred and spoiled, and the mark of it will never go away, and 'twas me as helped to do it, and she spoke so kind, not knowing—oh, I cannot bear it, I cannot bear it!"

Caleb let his hand rest on Cuddy's shoulder, and waited till his sobs should be less violent, thinking what it would be best to do. Presently he said, "It is very sad, Cuddy; but you did not mean to do it."

"I did it, though!" sobbed Cuddy. "I'll never go along with those boys again; but that won't do her no good."

"Did she seem to mind about it?" asked Caleb, thinking it might relieve Cuddy to talk it over.

"She did not say nought about it; she only talked of Nanny and cheered her up. And she brought some jam and things, and books for her to read, and there was only me was there, so as I couldn't get away, and I could not bear the sight of her."

"Did you tell her?" said Caleb, in a low voice.

"No, no, no!" cried Cuddy, hiding his face again. "Oh, and she spoke so kind, and said as I might go up to the house and clean the knives and run the errands until Nanny was well enough to come again,

and they would give me something to take to Nan for her supper every day."

"And have you been there? or are you going up now, may be?"

"I can't! I can't!" cried Cuddy. "Suppose if I should meet her. I cannot bear to look at her face that was so pretty and see what I have done to it—me and the other boys—but I was so forward as any. Oh, oh, I don't know how to bear myself!"

Caleb looked on, sorrowful and perplexed. If he told him of the pity and love of God—how ready He was to forgive, and to help those who wanted to get back into the right way—would it touch him, who never would listen to such things before? Would he even understand it?

"Cuddy, I believe you really are sorry," he began.

"I am sorry in my heart," declared Cuddy. "I wish as there was anything I could do to make Miss Gaynor be all right again; I wouldn't care how hard it was, I'd do it."

"Well, then," said Caleb, "there is one thing that you can do. Go to Miss Gaynor and tell her how sorry you are, and ask her to please to forgive you."

"No, no, not that!" cried Cuddy, rolling himself on to the floor out of reach of Caleb's hand.

"That is what you will do if you are really sorry," said Caleb, firmly but gently. "If you do not, I

shall know that it is only that you do not like to see the damage you had a hand in doing: that is only selfish sorrow. If your sorrow is anything more than that, you will go and tell her and beg forgiveness. I am sure she will be kind. You will never be happy till you do."

Cuddy made no answer, but by-and-by he rolled a little nearer. "I couldn't," he said at last. "I know I couldn't. I'd sooner die!"

"Yes, but dying will do her no good," returned Caleb. "This is the only thing left for you to do, and you will be brave and do it. Come, or it will be getting late, and you may not be able to see her."

"Now?" said Cuddy, piteously.

"Now," replied Caleb, getting up. But Cuddy was sure the servants would not let him see her,—would want to know why he asked for her; he should not dare to speak if he did see her.

"Are you sorry for her, or for yourself?" interrupted Caleb. "Cuddy, if you like, I will come with you and ask for Miss Gaynor, and tell her that you have something to confess to her that you are very sorry about, and then you must do the rest."

With a long, quivering sob Cuddy consented; and Caleb helped him up and brushed the dust off him, and they went up together to the house. One side of Miss Gaynor's face was indeed red and scarred,

and there was still sticking-plaster over part of it, that made it look worse. Cuddy hid his eyes and would not look up at her; but when Caleb had done his part, as he had promised, Cuddy sobbed out, "I was along with the boys that night, miss, hishing on the pony, but I never thought—and indeed I am real sorry in my heart. I've hurted you uncommon, I know, but if you will please to forgive me——"

"My poor boy, were you one of them? I am so sorry," said Miss Gaynor, kindly. "Yes, I forgive you with all my heart. Don't cry so; I am getting all right again now, and so is the pony. Do not trouble about it any more, my boy; I know you did not mean to hurt me, and I shall not think any the worse of you for it, but I am glad you came to tell me."

Cuddy drew a long sigh of relief when they were outside the door again. "She's a nice lady," he said. "I'm glad to have got it done. Thank you, Caleb." These sentences were jerked out separately, and then, after a longer pause, "I'll tell Nanny."

"Do," said Caleb. "And, Cuddy, before you go to bed to-night, tell God how sorry you are about it, and ask Him to forgive you, for Christ's sake, and help you to keep in the right way."

Cuddy gave a sort of nod, and scampered away down the lane.

Early the next Sunday morning Cuddy was hanging about the gate to speak to Caleb. "Do you think Miss Gaynor would like for me to go to Sunday school?" he asked.

Caleb was sure she would.

"Can I?" said Cuddy, with a doleful glance at his untidy garments.

"Miss Carter don't care, so long as you be clean," pronounced Caleb. "Come you up to me before the time, and we'll polish you up a bit."

So Caleb had the satisfaction of at last presenting to Miss Carter the scholar whom he had almost despaired of gaining. But Cuddy would not follow it up by coming to church: he had no mind to see Mr. Brice, he said, though Caleb suspected that the possibility of Miss Gaynor's being there had more to do with it. Mr. Brice was unusually subdued and gentle in his manner; and when at the Communion, which was held that Sunday, he saw most of his confirmation candidates remaining to swell the scanty numbers, and addressed them as "Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye that mind to come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ," there was a deep thrill in his voice that Caleb had never heard in it before.

He was growing fond of Mr. Brice, whom so few people liked; for the ill-disposed in the parish objected to his meddling with their ways, and the well-disposed

objected to his having taken up Tim and one or two like him, in preference to the sober and well-behaved. True, he had discovered his error ; but people had not forgiven him for it, and the curate stood almost alone among the people whom he so heartily desired to serve. Caleb was sorry that the time was come for Mr. Brice to look out for another lodging ; and when he said something to that effect the smile of thanks which answered him quite went to his heart. Jenny remained hardened against him, and every evening told Caleb that she wished he would go, and let them be quit of him ; she did not like him hanging on in this way, not she. No doubt, few as his wants were, he interfered with "her liberty," a thing she was fond of talking about ; and of late she had been more than ever out, almost every evening holding private interviews besides with friends whom Caleb was never allowed to see. He was much perplexed in his mind as to whether he ought to tell his mistress about it or not, when one morning Mrs. Roberts came to him in the garden, looking, Caleb thought, as if she had heard some great news

"Caleb, put in the horse to go and meet the train they call up-mail," she said. "You must drive, for we go away, your master and I too."

"No bad news, ma'am, I hope ?" said Caleb, laying aside his hoe.

“No ; there is news, but it is good. Why should I make it secret ? Mr. Roberts has heard of his brother, who was lost, oh, before we came to this place. He is found, but he is poor, and we go to see him. But I had more to say. Ah, yes, the Lloyds will leave their house for a few days, because there is a bad, nasty smell, and a drain must be opened and set right ; and Mrs. Lloyd and Miss Gaynor will go to the Carters, and Mr. Lloyd to his friend Sir Charles, and ride over each day, and little Fred was to come to us. I know not now will others of them come. I have sent to say there is room ; but be what may, Mr. Brice will remain till we shall return, and we will not be long,—a week, perhaps, not more. I have told Jenny. I need not say take care of all things, for you are careful.”

She hurried away again, and before long Mr. and Mrs. Roberts were whirling away to London in the up-mail. The Lloyds, having made all their arrangements, did not care to alter them ; and in the evening little Fred alone came over, and was put to bed in the mistress's room. Jenny was excited and odd, laughing without reason, and looking flushed and restless, until Caleb thought one of two things must be the cause ; either she was taking to drinking, or she was really about to settle down and marry, as she so often declared her intention of doing.

One of the cows took this very undesirable opportunity to fall sick, and much of Caleb's time the next day was taken up by her. He fetched John Williams down to see her, for he was something of a cow-doctor, and by the evening she seemed to be a little better, and Caleb, who had hardly touched any dinner, came in to look for his supper. The kitchen was empty; this did not surprise him, but he was surprised to hear a little voice calling to him in the dark passage, "Caleb, is that you? I am so glad! Somebody sent for Mr. Brice to come a long way off, and I can't find Jenny anywhere, and I have been alone such a time, and it is long past bedtime."

"Dear, dear, Master Fred! this is a terrible state of things," said Caleb. "Have you had any tea?"

"Yes, just before Mr. Brice went; but Jenny never came to take away the things. I don't care, now you are come;" and little Fred hung on to his hand. "Suppose you were to put me to bed, Caleb. What fun!"

"Suppose I do. I believe that will be our best plan, Master Fred."

The little boy was in high glee, laughing at Caleb's clumsiness, and directing him as to what was to be done. Suddenly he sobered down. "Now I say my prayers," he said, and went to kneel at the bedstead. Caleb waited. Presently Freddy turned his

head without getting up, and said softly, "Do you think Jenny trespassed against me in not coming to put me to bed?"

"I should say she did, Master Fred."

Little Fred turned back and finished his prayer; then he came up to Caleb, and said, "I wanted to know about that, because you know it says, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,' and I thought I ought to forgive her when I said that. Do you know, I am almost glad that Jenny has done that—only not that she was naughty, you know—because nobody ever trespassed against me before, and so I never could forgive them, as it says we must in the prayer."

"God bless you, Master Fred, my dear!" said Caleb, looking fondly at the little fellow, who stood there so fresh and innocent-looking in his white night-gown and smooth-brushed hair. "Lie down, and let me tuck you safely in."

Little Fred put up his face for a kiss, as he was accustomed to do with his mother every evening; and then Caleb closed the door softly and went down to make a second attempt to get some supper. Jenny came in before he had finished, very cross, as she always was when she was in the wrong. She snubbed him for putting little Fred to bed, and grumbled about the house being made an inn the way it was, to take

in chance lodgers ; but when Caleb inquired whether she had left the front door all right for Mr. Brice, she turned upon him such a look of suspicion and anger, that he took refuge, as usual, in silence. Jenny called him back as he left the kitchen, to ask whether he had been down to the Tims' cottage that day, because she knew for certain that the father and mother and Tim were all away, left home early this morning for several days, and only the two children were at home. This piece of information puzzled Caleb : was it meant as an advance towards reconciliation after she had been so rude to him ? or why had she told it him ? He dismissed it from his mind as not worth thinking about, went himself to the front door, to make sure that Mr. Brice had taken the latch-key, and that it was left so that he could get in by its means, and then went to bed.





CHAPTER XI.

THE MIDNIGHT ATTACK.



SALEB had been in bed some time, thinking over Jenny's neglectful ways and little Master Fred's innocent talk, when the sick cow suddenly took the foremost place in his thoughts again. He wished he had gone out to see her before he came up to bed: suppose she should be worse, suppose she should be wanting something, suppose she should die before morning! He lay supposing until he could stand it no longer, and getting up he slipped on his things, and took his stable lantern to go out to her. A light shone from the crack of the kitchen door, Jenny was still up, and yet it must be past ten—a late hour in that early household. May be she had repented of her crossness, and meant to sit

up till Mr. Brice came in. Caleb did not care to encounter her, and passed out as noiselessly as he could.

The cow was all right, chewing the cud in the most satisfactory manner, and answering by a soft low to his caress. Caleb shook out the litter, arranged her food, and left the cowhouse much relieved. As he turned to fasten the door his lantern swung open, and in a moment the candle was out. No matter, he knew his way, and he felt along by the ivied wall in some dismay at the thought that had just struck him, that Jenny might in the meantime have bolted the door and gone up to bed; and what should he do then? Hark! surely there was a sound of low voices near. Nonsense! he was only fancying; likely enough the leaves rustled. No, there it was again, followed by a smothered laugh. There were people at the back door, visitors of Jenny's, no doubt; but he would rather not come across them. Caleb halted, and then words reached his ears that made his flesh run cold. These were no visitors; they were planning means of disguise, of entrance, to do what? to rob? to murder? He caught Mr. Brice's name, and the voices sank again, in whispered consultation. There was light in the kitchen window still. How should he manage to warn Jenny of the danger? Caleb laid himself on the ground, as he had read of Indians doing, and wriggled noiselessly towards the

window. He could hear more plainly now, and he stopped, horror-struck, for, in answer to a question, "Was he gone to bed yet?" Jenny's voice said, "I've a-been up to his door; 'tis all quiet; but he've a way of sitting reading o' nights. Best wait a bit."

Jenny was one of them! no chance, then, to keep them out of the house. But she spoke as if Mr. Brice were in the house; could she have gone out before he was summoned? and was it against him that they were plotting? Was that indeed Tim's voice that reached him? "We'll teach him. We'll give it him this time, and no mistake!" and a villainous laugh. "How about the boy? Best make him fast afore we begin." A pause, and then Jenny's voice said, "I've a-keyed'n in; he didn't stir;" and Caleb, anxious as he was, felt tickled almost to laughter at the thought of his empty room so carefully locked up.

"Let's have some supper."

"Ay, let's come in to supper; he'll be all ready and waiting by the time we've done."

Then for a moment the kitchen door opened, and Caleb saw, like dark shadows against the light, three or four men's figures crowding in.

He rose and followed to the back door, which was left on the latch. Mr. Brice must be warned, but how? Caleb stumbled up in the dark to his room; no, he had not returned. But he must be home soon;

every moment might bring him; how shall he be stopped? He could run to meet him; but might not the men mean robbery as well? Was it not his duty to guard his master's house to the best of his power, until help could be fetched? He had it! Master Fred would run and give the alarm, while he barred himself in and held out as long as it was possible. Caleb hastened into the next bedroom, felt about till he found a match, struck a light, and had to lift little Fred fairly out of bed before he could rouse him.

"Are you going to take me up too? but it's too early, Caleb," said the child, sleepily. "I don't get up yet."

"No, Master Fred; it is the night still, but wake up; there is something very important for you to do. Some bad men are coming here to hurt Mr. Brice, and I want you to run to Cuddy's house—you know it—and tell him to go and meet Mr. Brice and stop him, while I lock myself into his room and make the bad men think he is here, lest they should go out to look for him."

Little Fred's eyes grew bigger, but he pushed his arms into the clothes that Caleb put upon him without any appearance of alarm.

"Why not to James' house?" he said. James was his father's coachman. "He's bigger than Cuddy."

"Yes, but Cuddy's house lies the way Mr. Brice will be coming; and if you meet him in the lane, as

it is likely enough you will, you must stop him yourself, Master Freddy, else he will fall into the hands of these men. But if you don't meet him, go you to the window before you come to the door, on the left hand, and knock at it with all your might, never mind breaking it, and call you out, 'Cuddy, Cuddy! get up quick, and go to meet Mr. Brice, who will be coming up by the moorland path, and tell him there are bad men up at the house wanting to hurt him, and he must not go there, but up to the village, and get some men to come and take them.' Can you remember all that, Master Fred?"

"Yes," said Fred, gravely. "It is quite an adventure. I should like it very much if I was only sure nobody would be hurt. Oh, Caleb, won't they kill you?"

"No fear, Master Fred; only run you and get Cuddy off as quick as you can, and stay you there; do not come back again."

"And Jenny," added little Fred, "I don't want her to be hurt, though she was naughty."

"She is all right," said Caleb. "Where is your hat? Now, Master Fred, as gently as ever you can. Mind the step."

He opened the front door, and the child bounded out into the night. It looked very dark. "You won't be afraid, Master Freddy?" said Caleb, anxiously.

"Oh no," replied little Fred's clear whisper. "You

know God can see all the same; and if I do feel frightened I will ask Him to send an angel to take care of me. I can see better now, Caleb; good-bye."

"God protect you!" murmured Caleb, as he closed the door, and, going upstairs, took his station at the open window. He listened intently for the little footsteps; would he find his way? the lane was so dark. It seemed a desperate errand on which to send such a little fellow; and now if Caleb could have called him back he would. But Caleb put the thought away. "I have done it for the best; the rest is not in my hands. God can see, as the dear little fellow said. If I had left him alone with those men in the house, it might have been worse yet for him. Now what had I best do next?"

He hastily carried the silver and the few other valuables belonging to his master into Mr. Brice's room. A gun hung in the study; Caleb did not know how to use it, nor even whether it was loaded, but he carried that up too, lest the house-breakers should get hold of it; then he locked and bolted the door, and hid away his lighted candle.

He was no more than in time; stealthy footsteps were on the stairs, and the lock of the door turned softly once and again, then followed a whispered consultation. Caleb stood in the middle of the room, his heart beating thick and fast. If he could

only hear signs of help coming—only know that the curate and little Fred were safe! He must gain time by every means in his power. The door was being cautiously fingered again, they were trying to pick the lock; but he had bolted it, so that would serve them little. A rap presently made him start violently. “Mr. Brice! Mr. Brice, sir, you are wanted for a sick person!” called a muffled voice, not Jenny’s, but a man’s.

Caleb made no answer, but let them continue knocking and shaking. “Perhaps he ain’t there, after all; it’s uncommon quiet,” suggested a voice.

“Eh?” said Caleb, in the deepest and sleepest tone that he could muster.

“Ay, he be there sure enough;” then louder, “Please, sir, you’re wanted at once—very particular.”

Caleb looked round, caught up Mr. Brice’s best hat from the top of the drawers, and speaking into it to make his voice deep, he answered, “What for?”

He shook with silent laughter at the extraordinary tones he produced, and at the success with which they imposed on the men at the door, though all the while wondering and vexed with himself for laughing at such a time.

Explanations and urgent demands for him to open the door followed, which Caleb lengthened out as long as he could, and then said, in the same style, “I am dressing; wait a bit.”



"WHERE'S THE CURATE?"

But those outside were getting impatient, and the shaking and thumping at the door presently became so violent that Caleb began to fear that the bolt or the hinges would give way. He looked round for something with which to barricade it, for it opened inwards. The chest of drawers was the heaviest piece of furniture in the room; he pulled out the drawers, pushed the frame up against the door, and then put them back in their places. All this could not be done without noise, and the men, perceiving that he meant to bar them out, redoubled their attack.

Caleb stood on guard, poker in hand. For a moment he had thought of letting himself down out of the window, but no; he was in charge of his master's property, and defend it he would to the utmost.

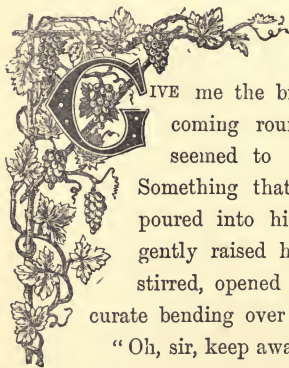
Crash! the door was in; but the chest of drawers stopped them for another minute. Then they rushed with a yell into the room and found—Caleb. "Where is he? Where's the curate? Where is he hiding, you young varmint?"

"Look for him," said Caleb, grasping his poker. In a moment he was thrown down by a rush of the men upon him, beaten, thumped, the breath pressed out of him; they were killing him, and no mistake; but no matter, he was at his post! He tried to remember a prayer; but only his mother's name came to his lips, and then all was darkness!



CHAPTER XII.

CALEB IN A DIFFICULTY.



GIVE me the brandy-flask again ; he is coming round," said a voice that seemed to come from miles away. Something that burned his throat was poured into his mouth, while an arm gently raised his head. Caleb sighed, stirred, opened his eyes, and saw the curate bending over him.

"Oh, sir, keep away!" he cried, attempting to sit up; "they are lying in wait to kill you. For Heaven's sake don't come here!"

"It is all right, Caleb ; your warning came in time—only just in time for you, my poor boy. We came upon them and caught them in the scuffle—all but

one who ran off; but three of our men are after him. Take a little more of this, Caleb; how do you feel now? Are you much hurt?"

"No, sir, I thank you, only dazed a bit, and stiffish."

"No, ribs broken?"

"Not as I am aware of, any way."

"Thank God!" said the curate.

"Yes, sir, and thank God that you are safe!" replied Caleb, fervently. A little hand touched his. "Master Fred!" he exclaimed.

"Cuddy brought me back after it was all over," said the little boy. "Good Caleb! you fought like Christian in the dark valley; and God would not let you be killed. Cuddy ran fast too—didn't you, Cuddy?"

Cuddy stood with a glow of honest pride on his face. Hitherto he had never meddled except to do harm to others; to-night he had helped on the side of right and order, and his self-respect had risen in consequence. Mr. Brice turned to thank both Cuddy and little Fred for their share in the work, and was beginning to relate matters more at length to Caleb, when a sound as of dragging some heavy body interrupted them, and the coachman and two other men entered with a prisoner.

"We have found him, Mr. Brice! we've cotched him at last, sir! Now then, you, 'tis no use hiding of your face, we'll soon know who you are."

They pulled off the mufflers in which he was

wrapped, and held up a candle to the wretched man's face. Cuddy threw up his arms with a bitter cry, and flung himself on the floor. It was Tim.

Mr. Brice hurried him away to some place where he could be secured for the night; the other three men were already in safe keeping, and Jenny—miserable, faithless Jenny—was locked, sobbing and protesting, into her own room. He took little Fred back to bed, kissing him and bidding him sleep as long and as late as he could, and he spoke soothingly to Cuddy, and told him to go back to his sister, who must be getting restless and anxious, left alone there. But Caleb he insisted upon putting into his own bed, that he might look after him while he wrote letters and made arrangements for the morrow's work. He should not go to bed, he declared, if there were a dozen beds waiting for him; he was far too wide awake to think of sleep to-night. So thought Caleb of himself; and while he thought so the events of the night mingled in a confused mass before his mind, his eyes closed, and the exhausted boy was fast asleep. The curate smiled, saying to himself, "The best thing for him; but we will have the doctor here to-morrow;" placed a screen between Caleb and the light, and went to work. Warrants must be obtained at daybreak from the nearest magistrate, evidence must be collected, and depositions taken down, for the Assizes were just

coming off, and the case would have to be tried at once.

Daylight found Mr. Brice still writing or reflecting, and when the village woke and the house began to buzz with people, some come out of curiosity, some to make themselves useful, he had made up his mind what ought to be done, and sent messengers right and left to carry out his measures.

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd arrived early to embrace and carry off their boy, though little Fred would far rather have remained with Mr. Brice, having made himself, he felt, in some sort that gentleman's protector.

Jenny was examined, but she did little else but cry, and protest that she didn't know they meant any harm; she had let them in, yes, sure, because they wanted to speak to Mr. Brice, and one of them had promised to marry her if she did, and it was natural a poor girl should want to marry and be settled. Who were they? oh, she did not know one of them,—no, indeed. Tim! Tim was away, and his father too, that she could swear to, and so could Caleb; they had nothing in the world to do with it. But they were only wanting to take away a poor girl's character and get her out of her place, she could see that, and it was very hard; and so on.

"That evidence will not hold," said the head constable when he left the room. "If she asserts a thing, I should say the probability is that it is untrue. Now for the boy."

Caleb had been removed to his own room, but was still, by the doctor's orders, in bed ; indeed, he felt his bruises more now than at first, and was glad to remain there. He answered the head constable's questions clearly and simply ; but, the question not being directly put to him, he mentioned no names, and merely spoke of four men as breaking into the house. The gentleman then suddenly asked him where he had lived before, and whether he had ever taken an unserviceable cow to the fair in that neighbourhood. Caleb answered in some surprise.

"Had you any reason for wishing to keep the animal?" asked the head constable.

"Not at all, sir ; I was to have the luck-penny if she sold well."

"Why did you not sell her well when you had the power?"

"It would not have been fair, sir," said Caleb, colouring.

"Do you remember the person who was going to buy her? No? But I remember you, though I have never had an opportunity before of thanking you for your honest dealing with me that day."

"That story will tell well in court for the boy's trustworthiness," said the head constable to Mr. Brice. "I believe that he has told me the truth throughout. Now I must see that brother of one of the prisoners,

and then Mr. Lloyd's little boy ; do you keep nothing but children in this parish, Mr. Brice ? ”

The Tims' cottage was looking cleaner and tidier than it had done for many a day, for old Patience, with true kindness, had gone down there to see could she do aught for the poor young maid, and, as she herself added, she was a good hand yet at clearing a place out. Cuddy answered readily with regard to his part of the business, but seemed shy and fidgety when questioned about his people. Father and mother and Tim had all gone to Port Trawler on the morning before it happened—that he stuck to, and Nanny said the same.

Little Fred, when his turn came, leaned against the head constable's knee and told him a great deal more than he asked. He gave him the whole history of Jenny's neglect of him, and how Caleb had put him to bed, and what he had said to him when he called him up in the night, and ended with unbounded praises of Caleb's courage and Cuddy's readiness and activity, until the head constable laughingly charged him with being witness and advocate in one.

On the Sunday after these things took place, Caleb, not yet able to go out, was sitting by the window in his room, with his open Bible before him, when a slight noise made him look up, and he saw Cuddy peeping in. Caleb held out his hand with a smile, and Cuddy

came to him, treading softly, as though afraid of being overheard.

“Caleb, be you going to the trial?”

“I must go; I am subpoenaed, whatever that may be; but why, Cuddy?”

“You won’t bring Tim into trouble by saying ’twas him as done it!” cried Cuddy, in an entreating voice.

Caleb was surprised. “Why, there he is—put on trial along with the rest of the men. There is no doubt about it, I am afraid.”

“Yes, but there is for him,” said Cuddy. “He was not took on the spot, you know, but brought in after, and nobody can say they seen him. There’s Jenny has declared from the first Tim was not there, and father and mother both ready to swear he was down at Port Trawler along with them; and he says himself he was only going to visit a sweetheart, and thinking no harm. You can’t be sure which way it is.”

“But I am sure,” said Caleb, sadly. “I thought I saw him at the kitchen door, and I know I saw him in the room, when his face was close down upon mine, and his knee pressing my life out.”

“And would you take your revenge on him for that?” cried Cuddy. “Would you punish him by saying it was him, when nobody else can prove it against him? You have only got to hold your tongue, and he will be let off; whereas, if you tell,

and he gets put into prison, it will be all along of you and you will have made us all unhappy. I wouldn't ask you to tell a lie, only just to hold your tongue for Tim's sake, and for me and Nanny, and nobody knows that you saw him. Promise me, Caleb !”

“Cuddy, I cannot make that promise. I wish I knew what was right to do ; my head still feels all weak and muzzy. I seek no revenge, that you may be sure of, and I wish no harm to Tim.”

Cuddy broke out into entreaties again, but Caleb said,

“Don't ask me, Cuddy ; I cannot say yet whether I shall speak or not. I must do what is right before God. I will ask Him to show me the right way, for I am in a sore puzzle.”

The next time that Mr. Brice came in to see him, Caleb said, “Sir, I want to ask you a question. Ought people to do things or to leave them undone because of the results which they think will follow, or ought they to go straight on without heeding, and leave the results to God ?” Caleb feared to put his case more plainly.

“Do not come to me for advice, Caleb,” Mr. Brice said, turning his face away. “I have not proved myself fit even to rule my own conduct. But I can answer you this, that I have been trying to manage results for myself a great deal too much, and I think the safer rule is to go straight on, as you say. See what has come of my management !”

“ He means the taking up of Tim when he was not a fit one for it, and there were many others who would have profited better, and then the casting him off as violently,” thought Caleb, when the curate was gone. “ Poor gentleman! no wonder he is looking so ill. I believe he takes Tim’s misdeeds to heart as sorely as if he had brought them on him. Maybe he would be glad if Tim was to get off, after all: oh! how shall I know what I ought to do ?

Mr. and Mrs. Roberts had returned home full of dismay at what had happened during their absence, and of gratitude to Caleb for so faithfully defending their property against such fearful odds. The sturdy country girl whom they engaged to fill Jenny’s place was far pleasanter to deal with; and though, as she confessed, her pastry was no-shapes, and her puddings turned out well or ill, just as luck would have it, still she got through five times the work that Jenny did, and thought nothing of running out to fetch the cows, or dig the potatoes, or cut some cabbage as well; so that Caleb, still sore and weak with the pounding he had received, might take things as easily as he pleased. He was in the garden, thinning out some seed-beds that were running wild for want of attention, when he saw Miss Carter coming down the lane, and hastened to meet her. She would give him advice better than any one he knew.

Miss Carter greeted him kindly. “ I would have

come to see you, Caleb," she said, "but my father has been, and still is, so unwell that I can seldom leave him."

"I am sorry for that, miss," said Caleb. "Could you stop a minute to give me the help of your advice, for I am much in want of it?"

"Gladly, if I am able. Let us sit down here," said Miss Carter, for she thought Caleb looked pale.

"It is about giving evidence, miss," said Caleb; "whether I ought to tell all I know, when my doing so might lead to heavier punishment than would be inflicted if I were to hold my tongue. I know I may speak out to you."

"Let us put the case still more clearly, then," said Miss Carter. "You know, we will suppose, some fact that will cause one or more of the prisoners to be condemned, who might otherwise have been let off; that is putting it strongly, but will it do for your difficulty?"

"It will do well, miss."

"What would the law of the land have you to do?"

"Tell it out, miss, I suppose."

"Do you know the words of the oath that will be put to you—that you will say the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

"But if they do not ask me that particular question?" said Caleb. "It seems such a terrible responsibility to condemn a man by one's own single word."

"What think you of the responsibility of letting such a man go free through your silence? No, Caleb,

that is not the right way to look at it. You are bound, are you not, to be truthful and honest? Then be so still, and be sure that good will come of openness and honesty, and none of deceit and keeping back of truth."

"But if I seem to see here that harm and sorrow must come of my speaking?" Caleb persisted; for Cuddy's pleading voice was still in his ears.

"That is to say, the conviction and imprisonment of the accused," said Miss Carter. "How can you tell that that is harm? May it not be the turning-point of a life of guilt? Or if not that, might not the man, if he were set free, drag down others into his own evil ways who might have taken warning by his punishment? to say nothing of the innocent persons on whom he might inflict much injury. Dare you step in and turn the course of justice, and take all these consequences on your own shoulders? Will you show cruelty and unkindness to the innocent by showing undue favour to the guilty? No, rather be true and just in all your dealings, and leave the consequences with God. Our business is with the present moment, Caleb; He will see to the future. Is there anything else that you want to say?"

"No, miss, I thank you; you have put it clear to me now, and I am much obliged to you." Nevertheless Caleb sighed still as he slowly returned to the house. It was a hard thing to do, and he did wish that somebody else had to speak instead of him.



CHAPTER XIII.

TRUTH AND LOVE VICTORIOUS.



REAT was the excitement in the village on the day of the trial. The witnesses had to start early for the county town in which the Assizes were held; and in the evening, when they were expected home again, almost all the village went out to meet them and to hear the tidings, all except poor little Nanny, still confined to the house by her broken leg. It was nevertheless straight to her house that the witness most cheered and most sought after immediately made his way. The poor little girl, sick and anxious with long waiting, started up at the sight of Caleb's face, and threw her arms round his neck, sobbing out her inquiries,—“What had happened? what had been done to them?”

All four condemned to two years' imprisonment,

Caleb told at once, but in a gentle voice. Her grandfather and grandmother were not coming back ; they had gone straight off, he believed to Milford.

"I knew they were thinking of that afore they went to Port Trawler," said Nanny ; "father had got all the money with him. But Cuddy ?"

"Mr. Brice took him with him to see the prisoners ; he will be home some time to-night," said Caleb ; "but I knew you would want to hear at once what had happened."

"Good Caleb," said the child ; but Caleb drew back from her caressing hand.

"Nanny, I told out all I knew : when they asked me was Tim there, I told them he was ; but I was able to say one good word for him, for some of the lawyers seemed to think that he had been wanting to—to compass the death of Mr. Brice, and I stood out that it was not so, and told his words ; and they believed what I said, because they knew I had told the truth about him before."

"Why won't you let me touch you ?" said Nanny, looking up earnestly at Caleb. "I know you would never do anything but what is right and kind to Tim and everybody. You always have, from that first day under the high bank when you didn't beat Cuddy. Here's Patience coming down to give me my tea ; stop and have a cup of tea with us, Caleb."

So Caleb stayed, and he was still there when Cuddy joined them, flushed and grave, but holding up his head. He gave a great hug to Nanny, and then went straight to Caleb.

"Caleb, I beg your pardon. You were right, and I was wrong. You did the best for Tim by speaking out, and I want to thank you."

"All right, lad," said Caleb, heartily.

"Mr. Brice is a real good 'un," continued Cuddy. "He is not going to let Tim come back any more to fall into evil ways again; he is going to send them all off so soon as the sentence is up, where they won't have all this brought up against them, and may make a new start, and turn out good and steady, after all."

Cuddy's voice failed, he was all but crying, and old Patience bustled about with the teapot, and uttered exclamations about the goodness of the plan, to let the children recover themselves a bit.

"Where will they go to?" asked Caleb, after a little while.

"To emigrate, Mr. Brice says," replied Cuddy. "I don't know where that is, but it ought to be a good big country, by the name."

Caleb's eyes twinkled, but this was not the time for setting Cuddy's mistake right, and he presently went on, with glowing cheeks:

"Mr. Brice brought me home in the trap, and he

did talk so nice to me; and, Nanny, he says that now we've got a fresh start too, and it just depends upon us that our name should be respected and well spoken of after all, and I mean it shall," said the boy, drawing himself up, as though freed from a load that had long bowed him down.

Mr. Brice left home the next morning, to see the chaplain of the prison to which his assaulters had been sent, and to make arrangements about their being sent off as soon as they were released.

On the day that he went away, old Mr. Carter died; and after the funeral Miss Carter left the cottage and went to the Lloyds, greatly to the satisfaction of little Fred.

This was the only thing that occurred during Mr. Brice's absence; but on the Sunday after his return there seemed to be an unusual stir in the village, everybody had taken it into his head at once to come to church. Caleb was there, of course, with his Bible in his hand; and Cuddy, patched and tidied by Patience, close beside him. Nanny had managed to hobble up, with the help of crutches and Patty's arm. She and Patty were already fast friends, and had agreed to be so for the rest of their lives. But Mr. and Mrs. Roberts were there, which was by no means of course, and many others who seldom darkened the doors of the house of God came thronging in, giving the clerk's

wife no end of trouble to find seats for them all. The fact is that there had been a change in public opinion with regard to Mr. Brice. Every one agreed that he had behaved very well under very trying circumstances, and ought to be encouraged; and this was the way that they took to encourage him.

Thus Mr. Brice, returning disappointed, humbled, and downcast to the work which he saw he had set about in so mistaken a spirit, found, instead of the cold looks and half-empty benches which he expected, friendly faces and hearty greetings, and a church fuller than he had seen it since the first day that he came there. In the fulness of his heart his mouth was opened, and he spoke that day as he had never spoken before, of Jesus Christ, the great Example of all goodness and the Saviour from all sin, until the hearts of the most indifferent were warmed.

On the following day the three gentlemen—Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Roberts, and Mr. Brice—had a long talk together on the lawn in front of Tresaith House. Mr. Brice wished to take Hillside Cottage, since Miss Carter was about to give it up and to live with the Lloyds; but that was not their only business, for by-and-by Cuddy was despatched, a willing messenger, to call up Caleb before them.

“Caleb,” said Mr. Roberts, when the lad stood wonderingly before them, “Mr. Lloyd wishes to engage you

as gardener and outdoor servant. I have told him that I am willing that you should go, and that I can give you an excellent character in every respect."

"Oh, sir, why do you want to part with me?" said Caleb. "I am very much obliged to Mr. Lloyd, but I do not want to leave you, sir, who have been so kind to me."

"It is simply because you can now command much higher wages than I can afford to give," said Mr. Roberts. "It will be an advance in life for you, and one that your steadiness and industry well deserve."

"If I know more than I did, it is all through your teaching, sir," replied Caleb. "Please do not turn me off for that, sir; I do not care for higher wages at present, I have enough for all I want."

"Let me explain myself," said Mr. Roberts. "I have been at great expense lately, and I must now save all I can." He had, as Caleb afterwards learned, paid the debts and set up again in life that newly-found and repentant brother, whose wildness and misconduct had this time given him so much grief. Besides this, Mr. Roberts had, at his wife's request, found a place at a distance for Jenny, who was loud in her protestations of sorrow and amendment, and had paid her expenses thither. Mr. Roberts continued, "I intend, therefore, to engage John Davies, who is a good steady boy, at even lower wages than I pay you at present, Caleb; and it will be a great satisfaction to me to know you com-

fortably placed, where we may see one another, and share our farming magazines as heretofore."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," was all that Caleb could answer.

"Then we may consider it settled, and you will come to us at the end of the week," said Mr. Lloyd. "You are young for the place, but Mr. Roberts promises to help you in any way that you may require, and he gives you so good a character for diligence and willingness to learn, as well as for steadiness and truthfulness, that I am glad to make you one of my household." Caleb looked down, and could find no words to answer. "You will sleep in the house for the present," went on Mr. Lloyd. "I intend to build cottages for all those whom I employ, and in course of time, if you remain with us, one of these will naturally be yours; and as the old man who at present looks after my affairs becomes too old for work, you may probably succeed him, if you continue to improve yourself by study and observation, and grow up an honest, God-fearing man, unspoiled by prosperity as you have shown yourself unshaken by adversity."

"Sir," said Caleb, "I don't deserve the quarter of this; but if you will give me a trial, I will try to be faithful and honest, God helping me."

Mr. Lloyd shook hands with him, by way of concluding the agreement, and was entering into further particulars, when Cuddy again came down the walk.

"Please, sir, there's a farmer-looking man at the door asking for Caleb; and he do say as he's your father,"—this last was addressed to Caleb.

"Take him into the servants' hall," said Mr. Lloyd, as Caleb hastened away; "and, Cuddy, tell the cook from me to offer him some refreshment. He is come just in time to rejoice over his son's good conduct and well-doing."

Caleb thought his father looking haggard and distressed. "What is it, father? is anything wrong?" he asked as soon as they were alone.

"It's all wrong, my boy,—all wrong except with thee, Heaven be praised! Have not you heard any report of how Sam has been going on?"

"Not a word, father; what is it?"

"Cheating, Caleb, cheating right and left, and spending his ill-gotten gains in riotous living, until he has had to run for it, with the police at his heels."

"Oh, poor father! what a terrible thing!"

"Ay, lad, you may well say so. Martha, she's been distracted, and well she may, for she made an idol of that boy, and see how he has repaid her. Did I tell you that we had heard from him? He has hid himself as stoker on board of a steam-packet that sails from Swansea to I forget what ports. Martha went down there to see him, and she says he's all dirt and grime every bit, he that was so smart and proud of his looks; and he had been one trip, a short one, and

he was that sick he thought to have died on the way, and he was shaking for fear at the thought of the long trip that was before him then, and yet he dared not land, for fear of the police. Ay, he is well punished, and Martha too. I never saw a woman so cut up."

"Is there no way to clear him?" said Caleb. "I don't mean the sin of it, but by paying them that he cheated, and satisfying the law."

"Paid they must be," said the farmer, "and I've been raising the money for it. Littleback Farm must be sold, Caleb, every foot of it, and even that won't do. I don't see my way out of it, except by selling a few of our own fields; and yet that seems not fair, for they would come by rights to you, and I have no chance ever to make up——"

"Never mind for that, father, I'll do well enough," cried Caleb. "Don't you think about me. I have got such kind friends here, and I am getting on so well, you would not believe. Why, only to-day——" Caleb stopped himself just as he was about to tell of his new place, his great advancement. "Father," he said, suddenly, "have me home to you. You must want somebody, now Sam is gone. Let me come home to live."

"And leave all thy fine friends, Caleb?"

"To be with my father," said Caleb. His heart swelled, but it was the right thing to do. "Mother would have wished it."

"God bless thee, my good son!" said the old farmer. "Thou hast done me good by that offer; but I'll not have thee, Caleb. The farm will be smaller now, not more than I can well look after myself; and it would be a daily vexation to Martha to look at my son, and then to think on hers. No, no, let it be as it is, but let me see thy face now and again, Caleb; thou art pretty nigh all I have left me to love."

"I'll come once a month and spend Sunday, if my master be willing," said Caleb. "And I am so glad you came up to tell me about this, father. I think you had best alter that will, you know. Sam and his mother will have nothing to look to now, if anything should happen, and we can never tell when it may come. Nay, it would not be unfair; I am well provided for. Hearken to this, father;" and Caleb gave his father an account of all that had happened, ending with the place just offered him by Mr. Lloyd.

"And you would have left all that for the sake of your poor old father!" cried the farmer, much moved. "Where's your master and the other gentlemen, Caleb? I should like to see them, and thank them for their goodness to my boy."

Caleb brought his father out to them, and Farmer Price, while he thanked them, took care to tell them how good a son he was, and how ready even now to

return home if he had needed him. Mr. Brice gave him a look of approval that sent an additional glow to his heart ; but little Fred, who had joined them, when he heard that Caleb had thought of going away, clung to his arm, and declared that he must never go, and he was a naughty, naughty Caleb to have thought of it.

The following week saw Caleb installed in his new place, and John Davies in his old quarters, proud to succeed him, and eager for his advice and direction. Cuddy and Nanny were removed from the cottage and put to lodge with old Patience, who says there never were two better children, always ready to fetch water or read a chapter to granny, as they call her, and making her feel quite young again with their cheerful noise.

Miss Carter has two rooms in Tresaith House, where she hopes to live for the rest of her life, and Nanny is appointed specially to wait on her. Cuddy is hard at work trying to make up lost time at his neglected schooling. He means to be a gardener, like Caleb ; and Mr. Brice, who is now settled at Hillside, and is a favourite with old and young, is to be his master, and to have geraniums with coloured leaves in his garden, and a little greenhouse for grapes, as they do up at the House.

The Sunday school is enlarged, for Miss Gaynor now takes a class of younger children, from which Cuddy has

as yet refused to be moved to the elder class. She is as pretty as ever again; but there remains a slight scar, hardly noticeable except by those who know of it, in memory of that night of the upset.

Caleb, in spite of a very respectable pair of whiskers, is still head scholar, and Miss Carter's right hand when anything needs to be done. He says he shall never leave off coming till she bids him, for one is never too old to learn; and the more he knows about heavenly things, the more he finds to learn and desires to know. He is already high in his master's confidence, and taken into consultation in all matters relating to the farm and estate; but he is as modest and teachable and unassuming as ever; "For what have I," he says, "that I did not receive? It is God's good grace that gave me a good mother, kind friends, holy teaching, wise counsels. Each want that has arisen He has supplied out of the fulness of His bounty, and blessed be His name! The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. He maintaineth my lot; and when my goodly heritage here passes away, He has promised me an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that passes not away, where, with my mother and all whom I love, I shall praise His love and goodness for ever and ever. Bless the Lord, O my soul."

THE END.

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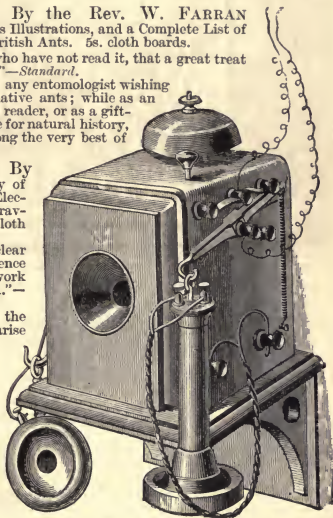
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